The
Californi
Sunda
Maga




"When the wave hits the reef and rears up, suddenly you're looking



THE BREAK

Female big-wave surfers prepare to compete on Mavericks's 50-foot waves for the first time.

By Bonnie Tsui
Photographs by Rose Marie Cromwell

COVER
Paige Alms, 30, north shore of Maui

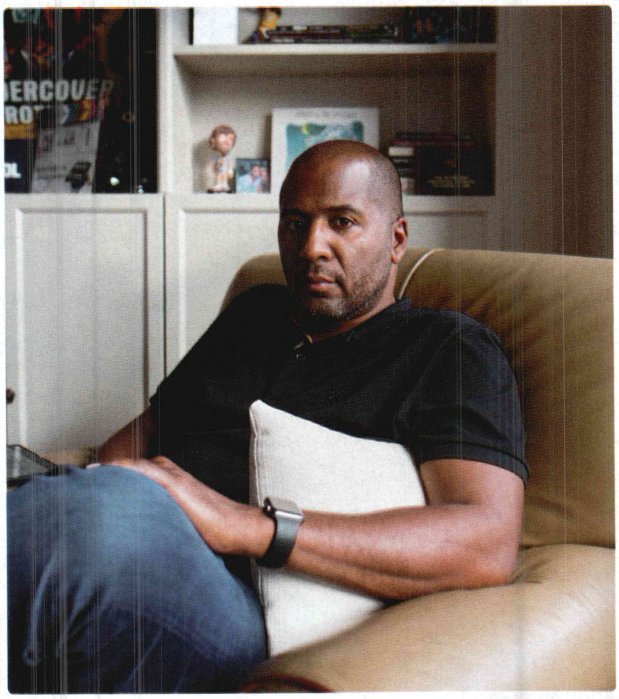
Features

62

ALMOST FAMOUS

After two decades spent making movies, including last year's record-breaking *Girls Trip*, Malcolm D. Lee wishes he could stop paying his dues.

By Allison P. Davis
Photographs by Brad Ogbonna

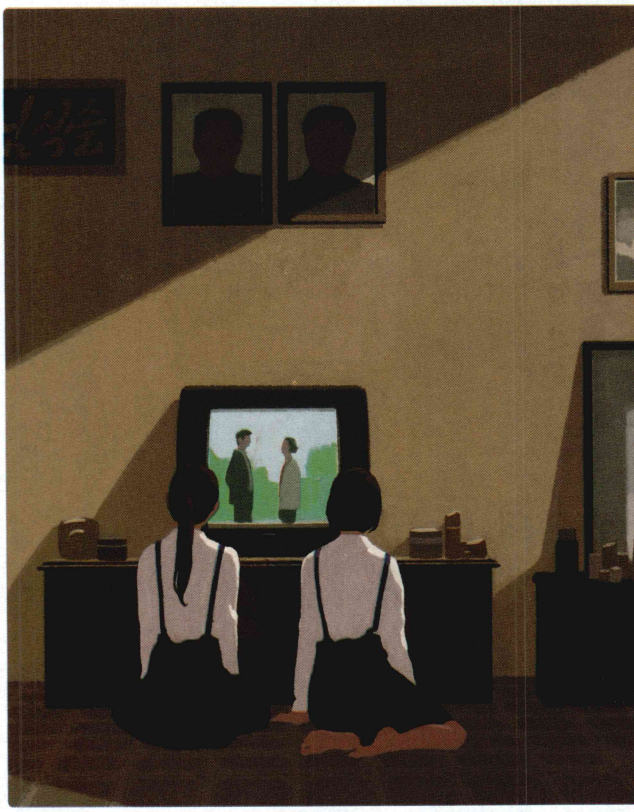


54

ON THE OTHER SIDE

North Korean women have been escaping to the South in search of freedom and happier lives. But what happens when hope leads to disappointment?

By Ann Babe
Illustrations by Hokyoung Kim

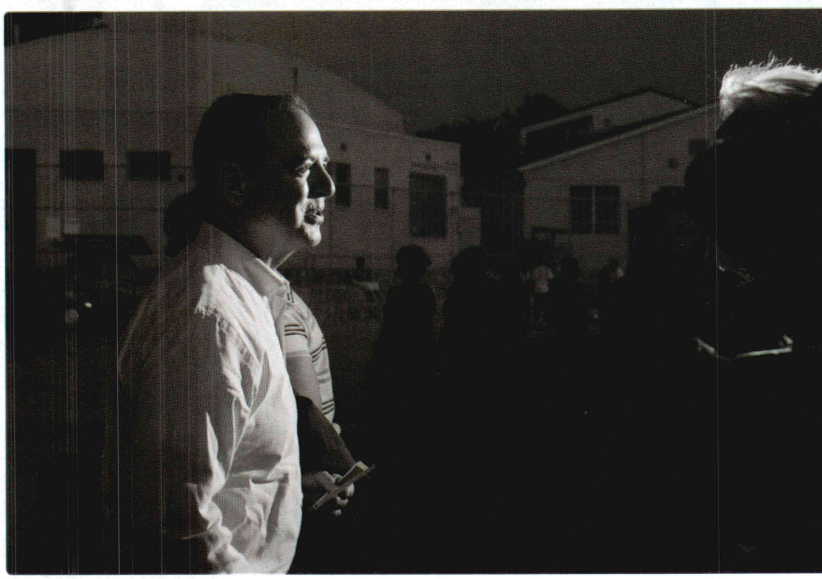


40

THE QUIET ANGER OF ADAM SCHIFF

Two years ago, he was a respected but little-known congressman from Los Angeles. Today, he's the face of the Democrats' opposition to Trump.

By Andy Kroll
Photographs by Kristine Potter



7

SANCTUARY

Eleven things to know about living in a sanctuary state

By Elise Craig, Haley Cohen Gilliland, Jesse Katz, Mike Kessler, Andy Kroll, Ashley Powers, and Joy Shan
Artwork by Daniel Segrove
Photographs by Kathya Landeros, Lisette Poole, and Kayla Reefer







72

Lucille and Cee Cee

By Wendy MacNaughton



COPYRIGHT © 2018 POP-UP MAGAZINE PRODUCTIONS



From left: Annie Jen, Francesca Mari, Joy Shan

This issue features the second installment of our new Shorts section. You'll recognize the look and feel from last time. But also, it's pretty different — by design. I pulled aside a few of my colleagues and asked them to share with you how this new section is coming to life, now and in the months ahead.

Photograph by Thomas Bollier

Me: What were we hoping for with this new Shorts section?

Raha Naddaf, executive editor: The old section was four or five stories that dealt with politics, technology, entertainment, art, and more. We often felt we couldn't go deep enough. And we pride ourselves on our special themed issues of the magazine, like our Sound issue and our Teens issue.

Me: The new Shorts section is kind of like a little special issue inside each issue of the magazine.

Raha: It's an opportunity to explore subjects in more depth and to do it in a way that feels creative, and plays with format and voice, and allows the reader multiple entry points into a single subject.

Me: Our first edition took a look at diversity in tech. It was all memoir, a series of first-person stories from across the industry.

Joy Shan, assistant editor: There has been a lot of conversation on the topic, especially since 2014, when big companies started releasing diversity data. We wondered about the experiences behind these numbers.

Francesca Mari, senior editor: We wanted to hear as many different accounts as possible. From all sides of the industry. In their own voices.

Me: This month, we took a different approach. First of all, how did we pick our theme, what it means to live in a "sanctuary state"?

Raha: There was a news event, the Trump administration's lawsuit against California. Also, immigration is a subject that we care about a lot at the magazine. Sanctuary laws have become this highly politicized thing. We wanted to explore the reality of the laws, which are more limited than people think.

Me: Instead of a collection of personal stories, we organized this package as a list of 11 facts or misconceptions, each one the jumping-off point for a short reported piece. We're already working on our next Shorts package, and we're approaching it in yet another new way. All of this makes for an interesting design challenge.

Annie Jen, art director: When I started designing our new templates, we imagined all different kinds of formats.

Leo Jung, creative director: Could we foresee the section being all interviews, or all illustration, or all photos? We were inspired by our special issues, where we're tasked with trying to reinvent the magazine a bit. We were looking to give the section a distinctive look but also flexibility. Part of the magic of magazine-making is being able to see how a design evolves over time.

Thanks for reading. If you have any feedback you want to share, write to us at hi@californiasunday.com.

Doug

EDITOR IN CHIEF

The California Sunday Magazine is produced by Pop-Up Magazine Productions and distributed to select areas through paid agreements with major daily newspapers. We're big fans of the newspapers (their reporters, editors, etc.), but they are not involved in creating the magazine. Learn more at californiasunday.com.

Our live series, *Pop-Up Magazine*, features writers, photographers, filmmakers, radio producers, and musicians performing new, true stories live onstage. Learn more at popupmagazine.com.

FOLLOW ALONG
facebook.com/californiasunday
facebook.com/popupmagshow
@calsunday
@popupmag
@californiasunday
@popupmagazine

SUBSCRIBE
californiasunday.com/subscribe

WRITE TO US
hi@californiasunday.com

ADVERTISE WITH US
cbas@californiasunday.com

WRITE TO US
hi@popupmagazine.com

ADVERTISE WITH US
cbas@popupmagazine.com

CORRECTION *Nicole Ramos previously worked as a federal public defender and not for the Department of Justice. Additionally, a surreptitious recording of Border Patrol officers was made by grassroots activists without direction from Human Rights First. ("City of Exiles," June 3, 2018, issue)*

HERE'S WHAT WE BELIEVE:

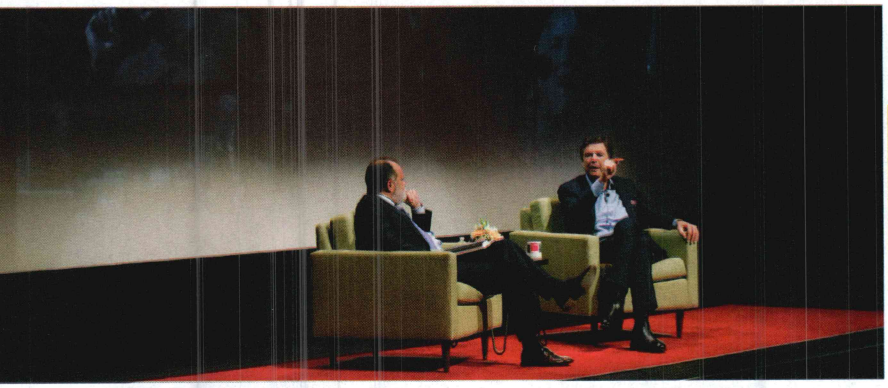
Most companies think having a strong opinion means scaring away customers who think differently. We think it's a good way to make some new friends. For the record, we believe we should eat stuff that we can grow instead of growing stuff to feed animals and then eat them. Everybody — regardless of spiritual beliefs, birth country, race, gender, sexual orientation or color of their nail polish – is of equal worth.



The reckless pursuit of profits without any consideration for the well-being of the planet and the humans that live here should be considered a crime. Companies have as much responsibility as politicians for building a society that the rest of the world can admire. Bigfoot the legendary Sasquatch is real. Okay, that last one has nothing to do with Oatly and is the personal belief of the guy writing this. Apologies, this ad is not a place for personal reflection.

Library Foundation of Los Angeles

A Library is...

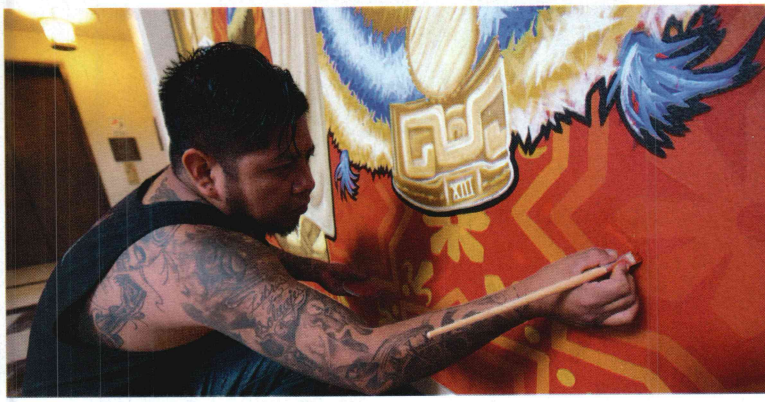


Bigger than a building

See history in the making at the ALOUD speaker series



Find the perfect gift at The Library Store



Experience headline-making exhibitions

and more than books



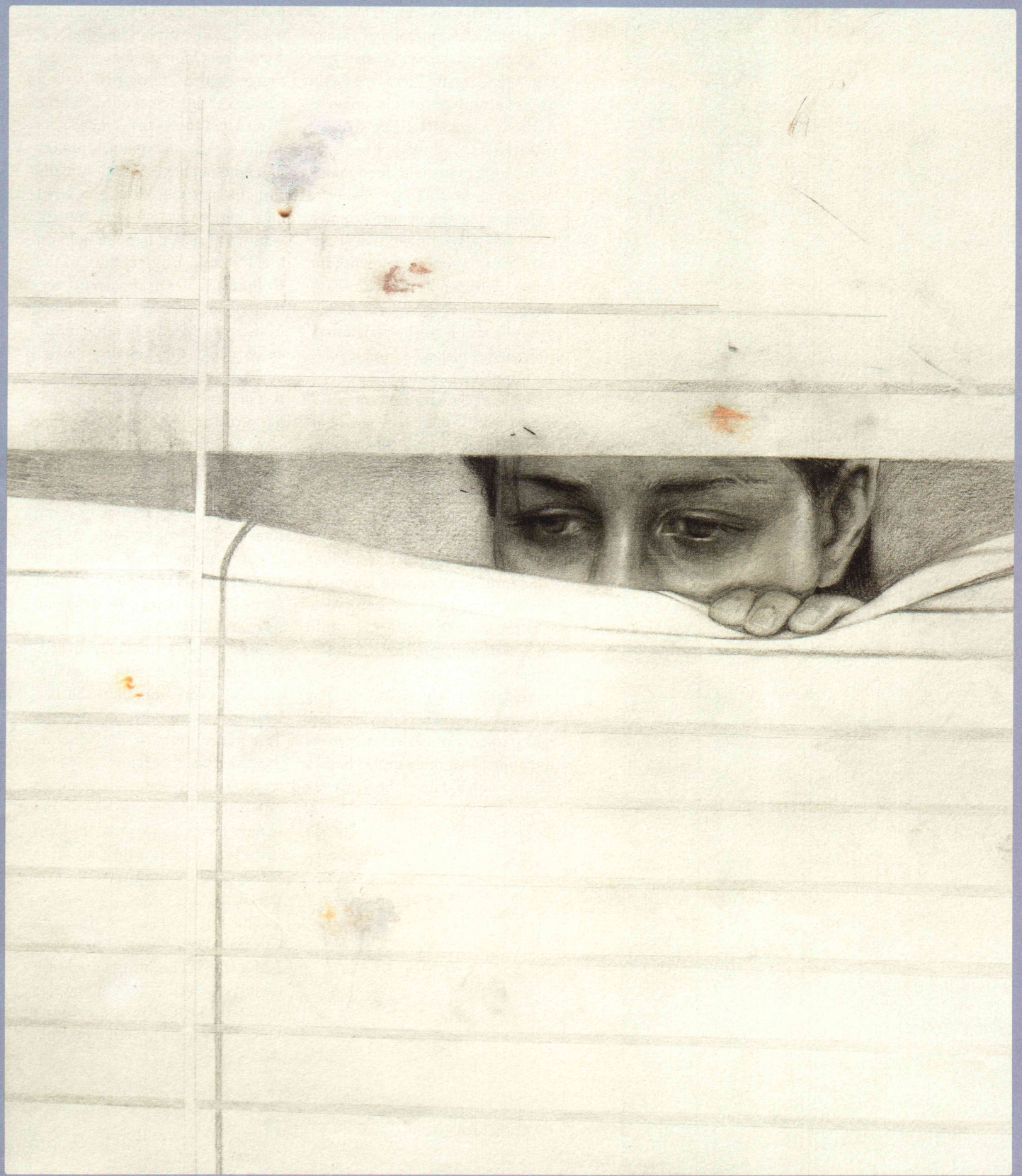
Meet a Dodger during Summer Reading

Join the *Library Foundation of Los Angeles* to support the Los Angeles Public Library today!

Visit *lfla.org* for more information

@LibraryFoundLA

Sanctuary



Artwork by Daniel Segrove

As the debate about immigration reform hit a new decibel this year, sanctuary cities, which have existed in some form for three decades (Berkeley, unsurprisingly, was the first), have become politicized to the point of distortion. In 2017, California passed its strongest statewide sanctuary laws with the California Values Act and the Immigrant Worker Protection Act. The laws were at once championed for protecting hardworking undocumented immigrants from deportation and lambasted for sheltering violent criminals. The reality: They do neither.

1 Sanctuary laws are more limited than people think.

Soon after Donald Trump's election, state Democrats summoned a group of lawyers and activists for an urgent call. Then–Senate President Kevin de León and Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon, the Legislature's two leaders, had made headlines with a joint statement denouncing Trump's victory. "Today, we woke up feeling like strangers in a foreign land," they wrote. The election results were "clearly inconsistent with the values of the people of California.... We will not be dragged back into the past. We will lead the resistance." Now, de León and Rendon needed ideas for how to do that.

A few weeks later, de León introduced a bill, one that had been conceived on that call. SB 54, or the California Values Act — which took its name from the joint statement — proposed blocking local law enforcement from working with federal immigration authorities such as U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). De León vowed that the state of California would be a "wall of justice" for its undocumented residents.

This wasn't California's first foray into sanctuary-style policy. The state had passed two earlier measures to combat ICE raids under Barack Obama's presidency: the Trust Act in 2013, which barred the practice of police and sheriffs holding undocumented people for ICE for anyone not charged with or convicted of certain felonies or misdemeanors, and the Truth Act in 2016, which limited ICE's ability to visit and interview undocumented people held in local jails without their consent and required local authorities to inform noncitizens if ICE asked to put a hold on them. But the original draft of the California Values Act went much further, banning sheriffs and local police from assisting federal immigration enforcement. They couldn't transfer anyone to ICE or question anyone for ICE or share personal information, like work or home addresses, that wasn't publicly available. "Trump had gone around the country talking about his plans for a deportation force," says Jessica Karp Bansal, the litigation director for National Day Laborer Organizing Network, who worked with de León's office to draft SB 54. "The idea was: We're having no part of that."

As with the Trust and Truth acts, the main opposition to the sanctuary-state bill came from local sheriffs, who now had a powerful ally: the Trump administration. The California State Sheriffs' Association sent a letter supporting Senator Jeff Sessions's nomination as attorney general, and in turn Sessions supported the sheriffs' efforts to defeat the California Values Act as it wound its way through the Legislature.

The bill's fate came down to Governor Jerry Brown. Brown sympathized with undocumented residents who lived in fear, but he also insisted that California couldn't block the federal government from

By Andy Kroll

doing its job. He demanded exceptions when the undocumented person had been convicted of a felony or when a judge has found probable cause. Protesters massed outside of de León's office — "No exceptions! No exceptions!" — but de León told them that passing SB 54 was just the start, the baseline, of California's resistance to Trump's agenda.

Brown signed the California Values Act into law last October at his office in Sacramento. To this day, there is confusion over what the law does and doesn't do, and about what a sanctuary state even is. Neither Brown nor de León wanted the bill characterized as a "sanctuary law," but immigrant-rights groups and their opponents nevertheless adopted that phrase as shorthand.

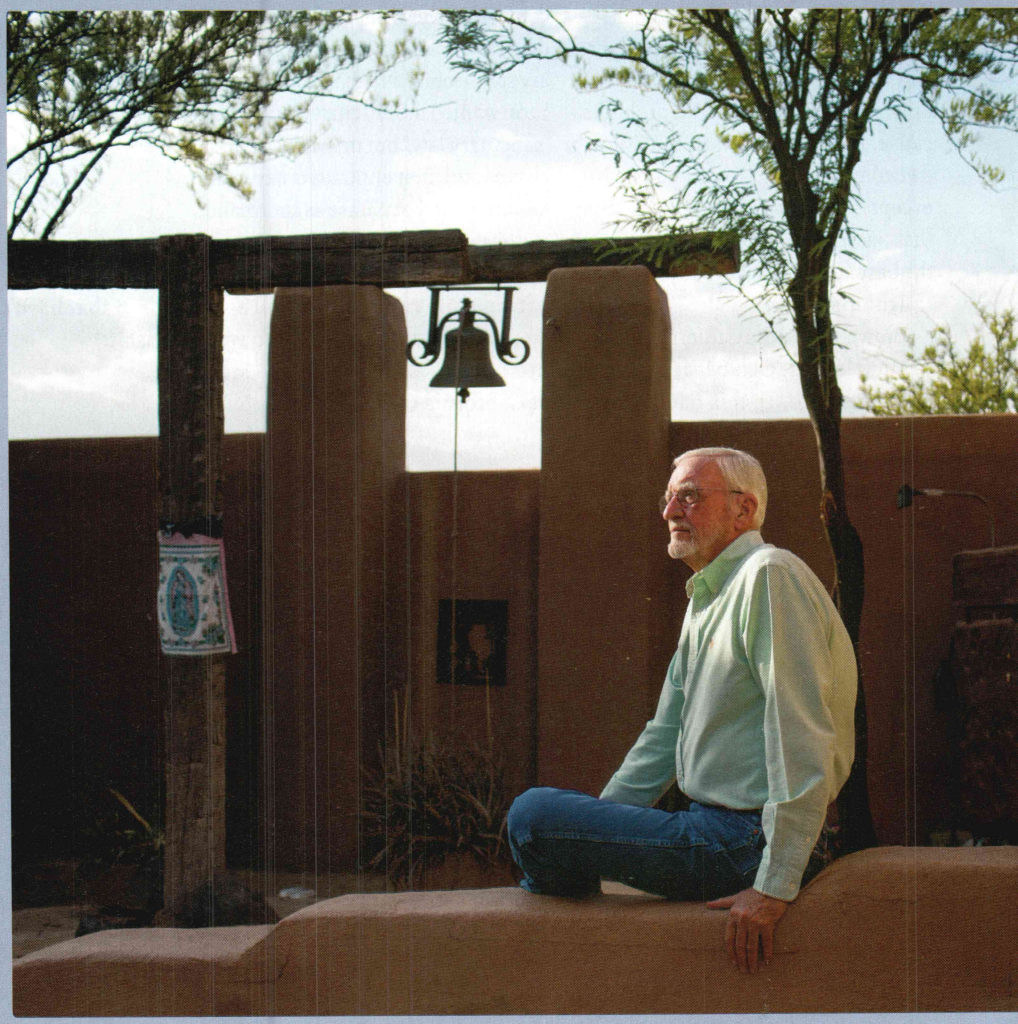
It does not — cannot — protect undocumented residents from ICE; it only limits communication between the state and federal agencies. But that hasn't stopped Trump from going to war against it.

In March, Sessions sued the state of California over sanctuary policy, arguing that it violates the U.S. Constitution's Supremacy Clause and makes it "more difficult for federal immigration officers to carry out their responsibilities." A federal judge upheld most of California's law in July, a decision that delivered a major win for the state while leaving the door open to further challenges by the administration. "Standing aside," District Court Judge John Mendez wrote, "does not equate to standing in the way."



2 The sanctuary movement began in a small church in Tucson, Arizona.

John Fife, retired pastor at Southside Presbyterian and one of the founders of the movement



In the summer of 1980, a group of Salvadoran refugees was crossing the Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument west of Tucson. It was over the Fourth of July, and the coyote who took them across abandoned them. Thirteen died; 12 survived. When Border Patrol hospitalized the traumatized survivors, they asked me to provide pastoral care. That's how I heard about the massacres and death squads in El Salvador and Guatemala.

After that, the question was, *What's our responsibility?* The head of Tucson's Immigration and Natural-ization Service office advised us to offer legal aid, but after eight or nine months, it was clear that no one was getting political asylum. It became a serious ethical question for us.

A priest at the Catholic church in Nogales, Mexico, formed a shelter for Central American refugees. He would contact us when he had a family or individuals at great risk, political dissenters who would be killed at home. We began to house them at the church. After almost a year of what we thought was a secretive smuggling operation — providing food and medical care and emotional support — Border Patrol told one of our attorneys, "We know what you're up to. Stop or we'll indict you." So we discussed it. "Well, what do we do now? Do we just sit around and wait to be indicted?"

The other option was to go public and continue our work. I said, "Maybe we could call the church a 'sanctuary' for Central American refugees because that's essentially what we've been doing."

We took a vote by secret ballot. Only two voted no out of the whole congregation.

Once we made the decision, a woman in the congregation said, "Why don't we ask other churches to join us?" And so we sent out a letter. Five churches joined, including one in Los Angeles, one in San Francisco.

Photograph by Lisette Poole

We had between 50 and 100 Central American refugees living in the church at any one time. Over 13,000 during that decade. It was intense. Some still had bullets in them when they arrived. We taught them how to appear Mexican in case they were caught. That way they would just get bused back to Mexico, and then they could return to the shelter in Nogales, and we could try again. We taught them who the president of Mexico was, Mexico's national holidays, the colors of the flag, words that were different in Mexico than in Central America. We told them not to carry identification.

Folks at greatest risk, we would get them to Canada. Canada would resettle them.

The idea of sanctuary evolved during the 1980s. People who were part of congregations that were part of the movement began to advocate for "cities of sanctuary." The basic tenet was to have public employees refuse to cooperate with federal immigration officials. And then colleges and universities raised the question, *Could we be a part of this movement?*

— AS TOLD TO HALEY COHEN GILLILAND



3 Not every place in California is pro-sanctuary.

Immigration policy doesn't often fall under the auspices of local government, but after SB 54 passed, cities and counties up and down California took action, passing resolutions against it and filing amicus briefs in support of the Trump administration lawsuit against the state. Here are their arguments.

The Los Alamitos City Council voted 4-1 to exempt itself from SB 54.

A sound bite that gets us riled up at the local level is when the governor and the state attorney general make statements telling the federal government, "You will not use our police force for immigration enforcement." From our perspective, the only police force the state has is the highway patrol. And if they want to prevent the highway patrol from working with ICE, that's their right. Our taxpayers have paid for their police force.

— TROY EDGAR, MAYOR OF LOS ALAMITOS

The San Diego County Board of Supervisors voted 3-1 to join the federal lawsuit against California.

I have over 3,000 emails, thank-you letters, and postcards that have come in that support the county's action. I have fewer than 50 emails from people who were upset. I've served three terms in elected office — I've never seen this level of feedback.

— KRISTIN GASPAR, SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

The Tulare County Board of Supervisors approved a resolution against SB 54 by 3-1.

Instead of ICE being able to work with local law enforcement in our jails, where we know we have bad guys and gals, they're saying our hands are tied because of SB 54. Now ICE is raiding our businesses and breaking up families. We simply passed a resolution saying that we wanted the state to work with the feds. The rhetoric, of course, is that we just hate brown people. I wish there was some way that I could assure immigrants that we want them here.

— KUYLER CROCKER, VICE CHAIR OF TULARE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

The Costa Mesa City Council approved a resolution against SB 54 by 3-2.

Back in 2006, we requested an ICE agent in our city jail. Over three years, about 1,300 people were referred to ICE. It was in the normal course of an officer's duty. These were burglaries, robberies, drug offenses, sex offenses, weapons charges. It was a whole range of crimes. These were not just people committing an infraction. Whenever you remove that many criminals from a community, you are making it safer. I'm a former deputy sheriff. To know that we're releasing criminals that we know will do harm back into the community — it boggles my mind.

— ALLAN MANSOOR, MAYOR PRO TEM OF COSTA MESA

By Elise Craig

4 The event that really politicized sanctuary laws was an accidental shooting.

On July 1, 2015, a 32-year-old white woman named Kathryn Steinle was fatally shot while walking along San Francisco's Pier 14. Police arrested José Inés García Zárate, an undocumented homeless man who had previously been deported to Mexico and had recently been released from the local jail. García Zárate had found the gun on the pier moments before it accidentally fired, the bullet ricocheting and traveling 80 feet before striking Steinle. The event transfixed the country. Advocates and politicians (including then–presidential candidate Trump) turned Steinle into a symbol of the cost of protecting undocumented immigrants. A group of Republican legislators introduced a federal bill called "Kate's Law," which would increase sentences for anyone caught illegally re-entering the U.S. Speaking to the *San Francisco Chronicle* in late 2015, Liz Sullivan, the mother of Kate Steinle, said, "For Donald Trump, we were just what he needed — beautiful girl, San Francisco, illegal immigrant.... We were the perfect storm for that man."

By Joy Shan

July 2015

VIVIAN HO, CRIME REPORTER FOR THE *SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE*
At first it was like any other homicide.

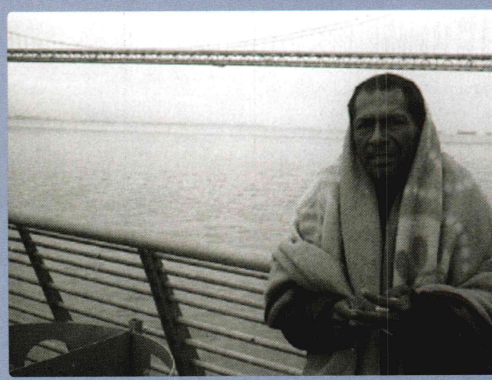
RUBEN NAVARRETTE JR., SYNDICATED LATINO COLUMNIST
When I learned that Steinle was shot walking on a pier with her father, I held my breath and thought, *I hope it wasn't a Mexican. I hope it wasn't an immigrant who was deported.* It turned out to be both.

HO Over the July 4 weekend, Donald Trump tweeted about the case. ["My heartfelt condolences to the family of Kathryn Steinle.... Where are the other candidates now that this tragic murder has taken place b/c of our unsafe border? We need a wall!"] When I saw that tweet, I knew this was not going to be a regular homicide.

DON ROSENBERG, PRESIDENT OF ADVOCATES FOR VICTIMS OF ILLEGAL ALIEN CRIME (AVIAC)
My family was on vacation in the Arctic Circle. When our boat docked, I got a million emails to comment. This never happens. There are stories ten times worse. But with Steinle's death, it was a combination of young and attractive woman and a killer with a heavy criminal record.

HO García Zárate had never been convicted of a violent crime. He was convicted mostly for re-entering the country after getting deported or for homelessness and indigence.

NAVARRETTE I'm watching TV, and they stick a microphone in García Zárate's face and ask, "Why did you come to San Francisco?" He says in Spanish: "To work in the kitchen at a restaurant. I heard there were jobs. I couldn't find one, so I became homeless." Then the reporter asks, "Isn't it true that you came to San Francisco because you heard it was a sanctuary, that you thought you'd be safe?" García Zárate looks at him and goes, "*Sí.*" Talk radio grabs ahold of this as a narrative: Kate Steinle got shot because of San Francisco's sanctuary policies.



José Inés García Zárate just a little over a month before the incident

On Monday morning, ICE is already telling its side of the story. They hold a press conference: *This was not our fault. We had a detainer on García Zárate. But you know who screwed up? The SF sheriff, who didn't honor our detainer request.* Almost a week later, the San Francisco sheriff, Ross Mirkarimi, finally makes a statement. He clarifies that a detainer is merely a voluntary request to hold onto somebody.

There's a saying: If you arrest two guys, the first to talk is the first to walk. ICE spoke first.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: JAY A. MARTIN, GUY WATHEN/SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE/POLARIS; MOLLY RILEY/AP PHOTO; MICHAEL MACOR/SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE/POLARIS

Late July 2015

The House of Representatives passes a bill to cut federal funding for sanctuary jurisdictions. It's killed in the Senate.

ROSENBERG Three weeks after Kate was shot, there was a Senate hearing in D.C. on sanctuary cities. I was called to testify with other members of AVIAC. Many of us had lost loved ones to illegal criminal immigrants, and we'd been trying to get attention for years. We looked at the Steinles and thought this was a golden opportunity.

MARY ANN MENDOZA, AVIAC MEMBER Part of our mission was to educate Americans about the dangers of sanctuary policy. We met the Steinles, but, unfortunately, they didn't want to be a part of any group. We wanted to hold elected officials accountable, but the Steinles wanted to forgive. ["Our family, we have not had a moment of anger, vengeance," Kate's father told the *San Francisco Chronicle*. "We had no room in our hearts, in ourselves, for any of that. And we just want to go back to being with our family."]

September 2015

The Steinle family files wrongful-death claims against San Francisco Sheriff Ross Mirkarimi, the Bureau of Land Management, and ICE. Later that month, García Zárate is formally charged with second-degree murder.

HO The San Francisco sheriff's race happened in the fall of 2015. The race was going to be tough for Ross Mirkarimi regardless, but once you throw in Kate Steinle, it was impossible. She was invoked nonstop — at the candidates' debate, at the *Chronicle*'s editorial meeting. The other candidate got more than 60 percent of the vote.

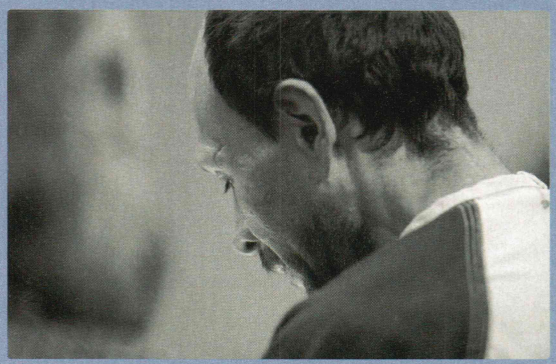
ROSENBERG In May 2017, Californians for Population Stabilization [a nonprofit that supports reducing immigration] emailed and asked me to appear in an ad. I flew to Washington and filmed it. It was a quick spot, basically: California is talking about becoming a sanctuary state, but it's a public-safety issue — the state should be a sanctuary for law-abiding citizens, not criminals. Kate's pictured as well as my son, who was killed in SF in 2010.



Kate Steinle's father, Jim, wears a bracelet in honor of his daughter.



Jim Steinle, second from left, testifies before a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing to examine immigration-enforcement policies as Kate's photo is displayed on an easel.



On July 7, 2015, García Zárate is arraigned on suspicion of murder.

October 23, 2017

The trial against García Zárate begins.

HO This was one of the only cases I followed gavel to gavel in the courtroom. The whole country was watching.

FRANCISCO UGARTE, ONE OF GARCÍA ZÁRATE'S PUBLIC DEFENDERS With all the national media attention on the case, we were concerned he wouldn't receive a fair trial. The media was consistently misreporting facts. Many did not mention the ricochet; it was seen in national media as a point-blank shot. In June 2017, a journalist for the *Washington Post* wrote that authorities accused him of stealing the gun from the ranger's vehicle, but that was an outright falsehood. And some reporters even said he shot the gun three times, which was proven false by physical evidence.

AGNES GIBBONEY, MEMBER OF AVIAC AND FIGHT SANCTUARY STATE I was glued to my TV.

HO The way Trump and Fox News spoke about García Zárate, you pictured this deranged, violent killer. But the fact is, Kate Steinle died from a ricochet, and anyone who sat in the courtroom knew this was a man who had a hard life.

November 30, 2017

The jury finds García Zárate not guilty of murder.

NAWEED TAHMAS, SPOKESPERSON FOR THE BERKELEY COLLEGE REPUBLICANS I was sitting in statistics class when I learned that Kate's killer was acquitted. I immediately began contacting other classmates. We organized a campus vigil. We set up big photos of Kate on easels. We bought hundreds of candles and spelled out her name on the lawn. After the event, I reached out to other College Republican chapters, and we shared this memorial video for Kate. It got 20,000 views.

GIBBONEY After the verdict, Fox News called. They asked if sanctuary cities killed Kate Steinle, and I said, "Yes."

Five days after being acquitted of Steinle's death, García Zárate was indicted by a federal grand jury for two counts of gun possession and one count of criminal forfeiture. He was taken into custody by U.S. Marshals in January and remains in jail today. If convicted, García Zárate faces up to ten years for each violation before deportation.

5 **Many cops argue that sanctuary actually helps fight crime.**

By Jesse Katz

Photograph by Kayla Reefer

To patrol the streets of MacArthur Park, the boisterous epicenter of Central American L.A., is to practice a version of the serenity prayer. What the law says and what a largely foreign-born community displaced by war and poverty does to survive often collide; policing here means untangling the things you can change from those you must accept.

"Right there, *no más*," Sergeant Joel Miller tells a knot of illegal vendors posted up on the sidewalks of this densely populated neighborhood, a mile or so west of downtown. A former Marine from Mississippi's Pine Belt, who still shears his hair into a tight flattop, the 30-year Los Angeles Police Department veteran is working out the kinks of a canny new compromise: Rather than cite or arrest the neighborhood's thousands of immigrant peddlers, many if not most undocumented, the LAPD is trying to nudge them into more orderly configurations.

"You're too far this way. You know that, right?" says Miller, pointing to a woman frying pupusas on a propane-powered griddle atop a shopping cart. Others are hawking *arroz con leche* from thermos jugs, raw shrimp from baby strollers, secondhand clothes from rolling wardrobe racks — all violations of municipal code 42.00(b), the city's longstanding anti-vending ordinance. "These people, I have no problem with them," says Miller, plying a wad of chewing tobacco in his right cheek. "They're entrepreneurs."

Even before California passed the Values Act, Los Angeles was taking its own measures to resist Trump administration policies. To shield sidewalk vendors from a misdemeanor charge that could put them in ICE's crosshairs, the City Council voted



unanimously last year to decriminalize street vending. Meanwhile, to test regulated vending, Metro launched this quasi-legal zone outside the MacArthur Park subway station — an experiment that Miller, who heads an LAPD transit unit, is helping to implement.

"If you're here illegally and you're selling tortillas at Sixth and Alvarado, do I want to see you deported? No," says Miller, whose mission this June morning is to keep the unlicensed street vendors from encroaching on the subway station's approved vendors.

Even during its more iron-fisted chapters, the LAPD recognized that public safety depends on victims and witnesses coming forward without fear (local law enforcement agencies that support SB 54, from the Sacramento Police Department to the Santa Cruz Sheriff's Office, make the same argument). Especially because these communities are often preyed upon: MacArthur Park's gangs, including MS-13, have a grim history of extortion schemes, such as charging "rent" to sidewalk vendors and muscling them into compliance. And so since 1979, L.A. has forbidden officers from enforcing immigration laws or initiating contact to determine a person's status.



"I want people to not be afraid to walk up to me and say, 'Can you help me,' without worrying about whether I'm going to deport them or not," says Miller. "I don't care where they come from — they're residents of the city of Los Angeles, and I'm sworn to protect them."

Since the passage of the California Values Act, the LAPD has made only minor revisions to its policy, such as eliminating questions about a subject's birthplace from field interview cards. Miller views SB 54 as simply reaffirming what the department has been doing all along, though he does think that local politicians should "get their brains out of their socks" and encourage jail systems to collaborate with immigration authorities.

Out on the streets, Miller needs people to trust him. "My friend!" hollers Josefina Serrano, who has been navigating MacArthur Park's improvised economy for a quarter-century. "*Él es muy buena persona.*"

"Yes, I know, I'm a great guy, but *aquí, no más*," says Miller, waving back her mobile rice pudding cart, away from the permit-only zone. "She's one of my entrepreneurs. She will creep around the corner if I let her."

6 Some ICE officials think sanctuary laws have forced them to be more aggressive.

John Sandweg served as acting director of ICE under Obama. Before that, he was the chief legal officer to the Department of Homeland Security, during which he worked with ICE to shape the DHS's broad approach to immigration.

ICE has the capacity to deport about 175,000 to 200,000 people a year. That's less than 2 percent of the 11.5 million people here unlawfully. Our entire law enforcement philosophy was based on this one idea: that you could only deport 2 percent of the undocumented population, so make it the worst of the worst.

Trump's rhetoric eliminated what little trust remains between ICE and local communities, and it creates a domino effect. States like California react because they feel compelled to protect their population; their politicians pass stringent sanctuary laws that restrict ICE access to jail. So the bad guys will most likely be back out on the street. But ICE doesn't go away, because under this administration, they're looking for everybody they can find.

It's always easier to find people living in the same house for ten years with four kids, those people who show up to work every day. It takes more time and effort to find criminals. So when the administration puts pressure on ICE to up arrests, those arrests hit people who are less dangerous. And when you pair that with, *Hey, we're not going to allow you access to our jails*, 500 officers in the L.A. area who used to focus on jails go off and patrol neighborhoods.

— AS TOLD TO JOY SHAN

Gregory J. Archambeault, head of ICE's Enforcement and Removal Operations in San Diego

For the past 20 years, ICE agents have had a desk at the sheriff's office. If somebody was booked on an armed robbery, we could conduct interviews to find out his status, and if he was an alien, then we'd put an immigration detainer on him, and then when he's released from the sheriff's custody, the sheriff would call us. Within 30 minutes, we'd have an officer there to take custody of that person and bring him back to our federal building. Whether he was on bond and whether he was convicted or not, we'd file removal proceedings with immigration court. That person would then go before an immigration judge. We don't make the decisions to deport people, judges do. Now, with sanctuary policy, if I know someone is supposed to be released, I might have to send three officers to stand outside the jail release door for three hours, four hours, eight hours.

— AS TOLD TO MIKE KESSLER

7 Many farmers, some of whom voted for Trump, feel unfairly exposed.

Joe Del Bosque Jr.'s most prized memento is a photo with his late father, standing in front of the first plot of land he acquired for Del Bosque Farms, now a 2,000-acre operation in Firebaugh, California, that grows almonds, asparagus, and organic melons. Del Bosque Jr. runs it with his wife, María Gloria, a Mexican immigrant who crossed into America alone at age 14. Though they lived just a mile from each other as teenagers, the couple met as adults when María Gloria asked Del Bosque Jr. for a job packing honeydew melons. Now she manages hundreds of workers.

Like most Central Valley farmers, Del Bosque Jr. is a Republican. But while many of his peers supported Trump, who promised water-policy reforms, Del Bosque Jr. couldn't bring himself to vote for either Trump or Hillary Clinton. He wasn't convinced Trump would back off his radical stances on immigration. The Del Bosques have struggled to find enough harvesters for years; Trump has made recruiting and retaining labor even worse. The state's sanctuary laws, as they and one of their workers say, have done little to help.

By Haley Cohen Gilliland
Photographs by Kathya Landeros

Joe Del Bosque Jr.

I have neighbors here who farm as much as I do, but they have a fraction of the workers. Why? Because they grow only almonds, and it's all mechanically done. Guys like me that harvest fresh fruit and vegetables? We depend on a lot of people. We're trying to push immigration reform.

Most of our workers are living here permanently. Quite a few have their green card. Some have a temporary protected status, which they might lose under Trump. A number of others come from Mexico into Arizona in April or May and then work for us for three months. It's a very uncertain labor force. We seem to be losing some every year. We've tried to source local people. But Mendota is like 10,000 people and Firebaugh, like 5,000 or 6,000. The melon industry alone requires thousands.

I didn't see the point in this resistance and claiming this sanctuary-state thing. It just inflames the situation. We employers are kind of breaking the law hiring these people. So it's just putting more light on us.



María Gloria Del Bosque

I go and I talk to our workers, and I tell them, "Nothing can happen to you here. We are here to protect you." I tell them that they can be calm when they work because nobody can enter our fields without a warrant.

People are scared they'll be taken and there won't be anyone to take care of their kids. I tell them that they have to prepare, to make a notecard with the name and phone number of a person who they want to be in charge of their kids — just in case. If someone starts to pursue them, I tell them not to flee because of what happened in Delano [a couple fleeing ICE crashed their car into a tree and died, orphaning six children]. I have some workers who have six, seven, eight — one even has nine — children. They see themselves in that couple and think, *That could have been me.*



Juan

After Trump was elected, harvesters got afraid and stopped going to work here and at another company we work for. Even my mom got scared. She didn't want to go outside. We go to Oregon for blueberry season, and last year we were afraid to go because we thought maybe there would be an inspection, that they might stop us while driving. We did end up going, but we stopped more, and only I drove. [Juan has DACA status.] She didn't want to go to stores. I did all the shopping.

California has a sanctuary-state law, but it also seems to have more ICE agents. You hear about raids in factories here that you don't hear about in Oregon.

[8] Other employers — not just farmers — feel vulnerable, too.

The Mexican restaurant in the office parks of Riverside was a 40-mile slog from Marie Wood's law office in Temecula, but the agenda for the monthly breakfast meeting of the Greater Riverside Employer Advisory Council addressed a topic close to home: the perplexing new requirements of AB 450, California's Immigrant Worker Protection Act. So she fought her way up Interstate 215, plunked down $30 for a ticket, and took her seat under the gauzy white sashes of La Casa Ortega's banquet room.

Nearly three dozen Inland Empire professionals had gathered over plates of eggs and beans and bacon: HR coordinators, payroll managers, safety directors — their companies ranging from a small dental office to the world's largest manufacturer of high-pressure gas cylinders. The invitation promised to clarify AB 450, which, since January 1, could subject employers to fines of up to $10,000 if they failed to protect their workers from surprise ICE raids. Already, the U.S. government was challenging it in court.

Caught between a zero-tolerance administration and a proudly defiant state, California businesses faced unfamiliar obligations: Under the version of AB 450 in effect on this Wednesday morning in June, employers must refuse to let immigration agents enter nonpublic areas of a worksite unless they come armed with a court order; when authorities ask to inspect I-9 worker-eligibility forms, employers must notify their employees within 72 hours of such a request. ICE had responded with a series of high-profile crackdowns, hitting 77 Northern California and 122 Southern California businesses in sweeps earlier this year, as well as several large Central Valley farms that employ thousands.

"Employers are in a very, very difficult position," said Wood, who is an immigration attorney, "and not having information is going to get them in trouble."

As it turned out, this local chapter of the Employer Advisory Council had been unable to enlist anyone from the state to explain the ins and outs of AB 450. Instead, the nonprofit group invited an ICE agent with little knowledge of the state law — and no motivation to clarify it.

"President Trump basically took our handcuffs off, so we can now work," said Special Agent Stephen →

By Jesse Katz

Marin as he paced the room. Marin regaled the audience with war stories, including the horrors uncovered at a San Bernardino County furniture factory, where the owner allegedly hid illegal workers in an airless shipping container. "Oh my God," gasped several attendees. He then urged everyone to join his agency's IMAGE program, which invites "exceptional" employers to collaborate with ICE.

"So, California AB 450 — you guys heard of that one?" Marin asked after about an hour. "I don't know too much about this law. It's not my law."

"I have a question," said an HR administrator for a mini-chain of convenience marts. "Say you walk into my office and ask to see our I-9s. We've been hearing from different lectures that we should never say, 'Yeah, there they are.' We're supposed to take those three days no matter what."

"I don't know what lectures are telling you that," said Marin.

"The state of California — they're saying you're not supposed to voluntarily hand it over," said the administrator, explaining that such a rule put her in an impossible bind. If she complied with ICE, she would appear "suspicious" to the state, yet if she fulfilled her obligations under AB 450, she risked looking "crappy" to Marin.

"You can give it to me that day if you want," said Marin.

It was then that Wood, already disappointed in this detour, could bite her tongue no longer. "I'm an immigration attorney," she announced. "AB 450 now requires an employer, a California employer, to give notice to its workforce — that's where the three days comes in."

The competing advice would soon prove prescient. Less than a month later, a federal judge in Sacramento tossed out much of AB 450, finding that it "impermissibly infringed on the sovereignty of the United States" and discriminated against private employers who choose to cooperate with ICE. At the same time, Judge John Mendez refused to block the law's three-day notice provision, which he described as a "courtesy" to employees and not, as the Trump administration argued, an impediment to immigration enforcement.

"Most employers still have no clue what their rights and responsibilities and liabilities are," Wood said a few days after the court's ruling. "I just don't know what's going to happen."

9 Asians are the fastest-growing undocumented group. And ICE tends to leave them alone.

Undocumented
Asian immigrants in the U.S.

500,000 *(in 2000)* → **>1.4 million** *(in 2014)*

385,000 *in California*

Undocumented
Latin American immigrants in the
U.S. in 2014

8.7 million

2.54 million *in California*

Most common nation of
origin of undocumented Asians

26% *India*

22% *China*

14% *Philippines*

Growth of undocumented
immigrants over a 15-year period

3.5× *Asia*

3.0× *Central America*

2.6× *Africa*

1.4× *South America*

1.2× *Mexico*

Most common cause
of illegal status among Asians

Overstaying a visa

Percentage of eligible Korean, Filipino, and Indian immigrants who applied for DACA

20-23%

Eligible Mexican immigrants who applied

82%

Number of people removed by ICE in 2016

1,554
From Asian countries

235,164
From Latin American countries

By Joy Shan

MIGRATION POLICY INSTITUTE, ICE, IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICES

10 Some sheriffs continue to communicate with ICE — indirectly.

By Elise Craig

When Orange County Sheriff Sandra Hutchens decided in March to post convicted inmates' release dates and times online — where ICE or anyone else could access them — she didn't expect the fervor that would follow. SB 54, after all, allowed her to do it. Although the law forbade her from handing inmates convicted of lower-level offenses directly over to ICE upon release, it explicitly permitted law enforcement to make release information public. To Hutchens, posting the information online was an easy — and legal — way to fill that gap.

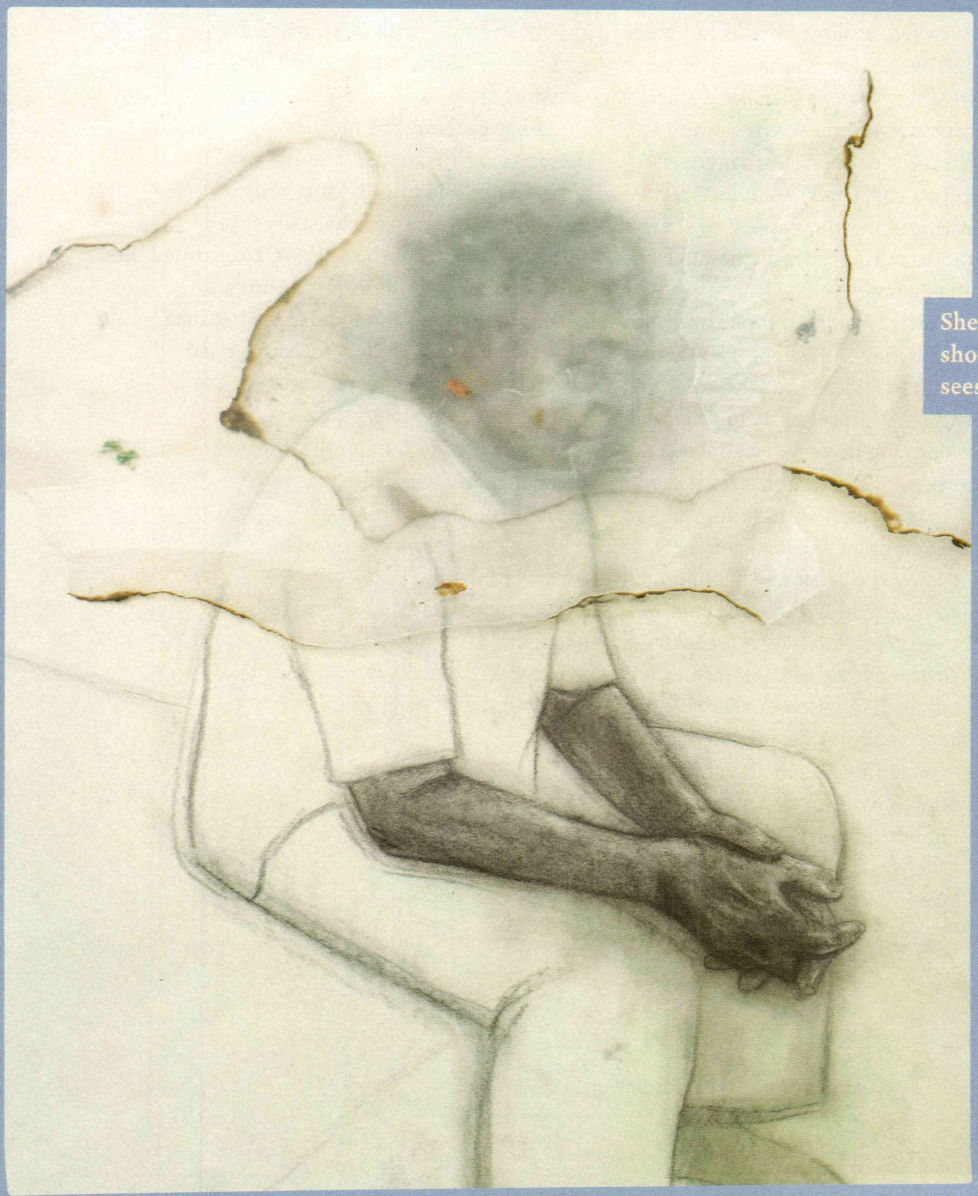
"We're talking about crimes against persons," she says. "Crimes where someone could get hurt. If something like the shooting of Kate Steinle happens (see Page 12), the people of Orange County are not going to look for people who voted for SB 54. They're going to look for Sandra Hutchens." (Orange County's database doesn't contain immigration status — only release information for convicted inmates.)

The county started publishing the information around the same time that the Orange County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution to join the Trump administration's lawsuit against California. Together, the actions drew outrage from immigration groups and tweets of approval from the president. A *Los Angeles Times* headline referred to Hutchens's decision as the "revolt of sanctuary law." In a news conference, California Attorney General Xavier Becerra implied that he might take legal action against her.

The anger over Hutchens's decision overlooks the fact that publishing release dates and times is not a new practice. Sheriff Margaret Mims of Fresno says that her department has been doing it for more than a decade to let families know when they can pick up loved ones from jail.

She believes that sheriff's departments should be allowed to cooperate with ICE, so she sees no reason to change the policy.

San Diego County has been posting release dates for about eight months; Los Angeles County has been posting them for years. And shortly after Hutchens's decision hit the news, the *East Bay Times* reported that the Contra Costa Sheriff's Office had started publishing the information in mid-February. Hutchens likes to point out that the California State Sheriffs' Association lobbied for numerous changes to SB 54, but that the ability to post release dates of inmates was not one of them. That language had been there since the first draft.



11 Safe houses have emerged to protect undocumented people.

Since her husband, José, was deported last year, María's life has resembled that of someone in witness protection. She changed towns and jobs and tried to vanish into the Southern California sprawl. She doesn't readily tell people her name.* Never shares her address, either (one of the people hiding her whispered it to me over the phone). María, who, like her husband, is undocumented, was determined to stay until their two teenage daughters, both U.S. citizens, finished high school. (She also has a son who had already returned to Mexico.)

Last spring, she and José went to the local immigration office. They had drained their savings — $5,000 — to get legal advice, so they were dumbfounded when authorities separated them, called José a criminal, and deported him to Mexico. Their adviser had withheld a key fact: Because José had illegally re-entered the country, he couldn't get permanent residency. The last time she saw him, it was through a detention-center window, his hand pressed against the glass.

María and her daughters lived at the address Immigration and Customs Enforcement had on file. What if they came for her? She picked up the girls from school.

"Whatever I could fit in my backpack, that's what I took with me," said Luz, her older daughter.

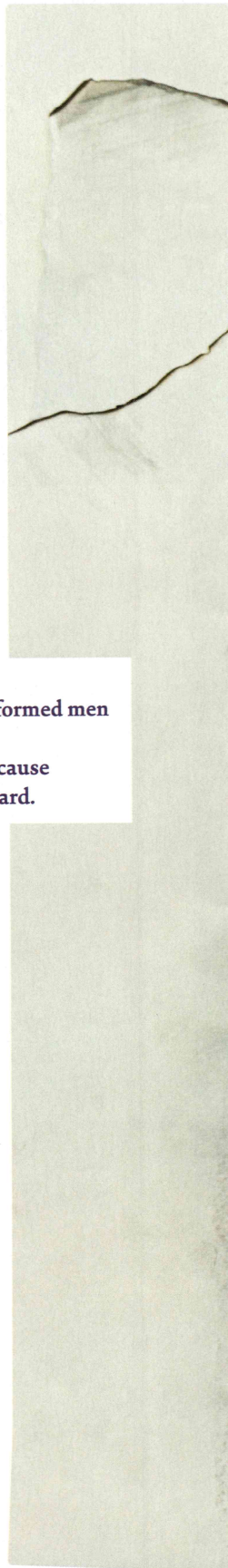
"I just remember taking my clothes and leaving and then never coming back," said Ariella, her younger one.

Later, Ariella showed me what else she grabbed: a baseball wall print that says, "Don't let the fear of striking out keep you from playing the game" — a birthday gift from her dad. It's one of the few mementos in the two-bedroom apartment, along with a crucifix, a picture of the Virgin of Guadalupe, and some Last Supper coasters.

María's fears were not unfounded. According to the nonpartisan Migration Policy Institute, in the first months of the Trump administration, so-called "at-large" arrests in homes and on the streets jumped 55 percent from the previous year. Local officials can't prevent these arrests, and ICE has revived the practice of also sweeping up "collaterals" — undocumented immigrants who happen to share a room, a car, or even a sidewalk with an ICE target.

Luz and Ariella wrapped up junior year at a second school. Their grades cratered. After months of couch surfing, María confided in a church friend, and that conversation led her to LA Voice. The multifaith group pairs churches with immigrants in need of financial, legal, medical, or housing assistance and has relocated about ten individuals and families. In María's case, organizers contacted Leo Baeck Temple in Los Angeles, one of more than 1,100 sanctuary congregations nationwide. Leo Baeck didn't have facilities, such as a shower, to house a family on-site, but it sent two members to meet María anyway.

One was Rachel. Her children are close in age to Luz and Ariella. In their plight, she saw a sliver of what Jews endured in Nazi Germany: people rounded up, businesses shuttered — at the time, all perfectly legal. She told me, "It's very hard to grow up as a Jew in this country and not ask yourself, 'What would I have done? Would I have the courage to help in any way?'" By summer's end, she and others secured an apartment for the family — a congregant is the guarantor — and U-Hauled over living and dining room sets and two beds. Along with five other congregations and LA Voice, they also raised thousands of dollars.



María radiates gratitude. ("My angel," she said in English when I mentioned Rachel.) But there's no escaping how small and scary her world has become. She mostly stays inside (when I visited, the lights were off and the blinds shuttered). **At the grocery store, if she senses someone hovering, she stiffens. Uniformed men are even more frightening; she once trembled through a long bus ride because a fellow passenger was a security guard.** One day, she saw a van emblazoned with the name MINUTEMEN — a moving company, though she didn't know that and panicked. Was it the vigilante border group?

"I feel like everyone around me is bad," María said.

"I'm scared that she's going to be detained," Luz said.

"I'm scared that my mom's going to leave me alone," Ariella said.

By Ashley Powers



The girls began senior year at a third school. They disappeared into their studies. "I'd rather not talk to anybody," Luz said. "That way I wouldn't feel like I need to tell someone." They rescued their GPAs and, with the temple's help, survived the college-application process. (María drove them across the county every Saturday for SAT prep — on surface streets, because she's terrified of freeways.) Luz got into a well-regarded school up north. Ariella will stay here, with her mom, and attend community college. It's hard to think much further ahead. When she turns 21, Luz can petition for her mom to get a green card, but that likely means many more years apart from José.

Outside the apartment, neighbor kids thwacked balls and laughed. Inside, María dabbed her wet eyes with her palms so her makeup wouldn't smear. Luz dried her glasses. Ariella sank into a cushy chair, face blank.

"We're all together," Luz said, "but there's always going to be that one person missing."

María added, "When I taste food, I wonder what he's eating, if he misses me, if he misses the family. If he's even doing OK."

The girls graduated high school the next day. María and Rachel sat on the visitors side of the football stadium, just above the 35-yard line. The class paraded down the track before crossing the field to rows of white folding chairs, a breeze billowing their gowns. María craned her neck. She spotted her daughters. She leaped up, waved frantically, and shouted their names. ☙

**Names have been changed.*



THE BR

Female big-wave



surfers prepare to compete on Mavericks's 50-foot waves for the first time. By Bonnie Tsui Photographs by Rose Marie Cromwell

EAK



Bianca Valenti, one of the world's best big-wave surfers, pulls up, her thermos of coffee steaming and her blue Toyota full of boards. San Francisco's Ocean Beach, with its fast and frigid waves, is her training ground. "When there's a really good day at Ocean Beach, see how many guys are getting out versus women?" she says to me. "Financially, time-wise, who can do it?"

Women have been big-wave surfing for decades, beginning in Hawaii. But the business of the sport hasn't kept up. The first big-wave contest to invite women wasn't until 2010, in Oregon, and it didn't come with any prize money.

Valenti's focus has always been on the big wave closest to home: Mavericks, 20 miles south of San Francisco. There, during the winter months, North Pacific storms send westerly swells up a bedrock reef a half-mile offshore from Pillar Point Harbor. The impact can create massive waves of 50 feet or more. "Mount Everest meets Niagara Falls," as Mavericks champion Nic Lamb has described it. Men have been competing in formal events there since 1999, but women have never been invited.

In 2016, Valenti and three fellow big-wave surfers — Paige Alms, Keala Kennelly, and Andrea Moller — helped establish a women's division. But a big obstacle remains: Mavericks invitationals are as fickle as the wave itself. Over the past 19 years, the contest has been held just ten times. If at any given moment a big swell appears during big-wave season (likely from November through March), competitors from around the world are given 72 hours' notice to make their way there. This year, nine women — six contestants and three alternates — stand to get that call.



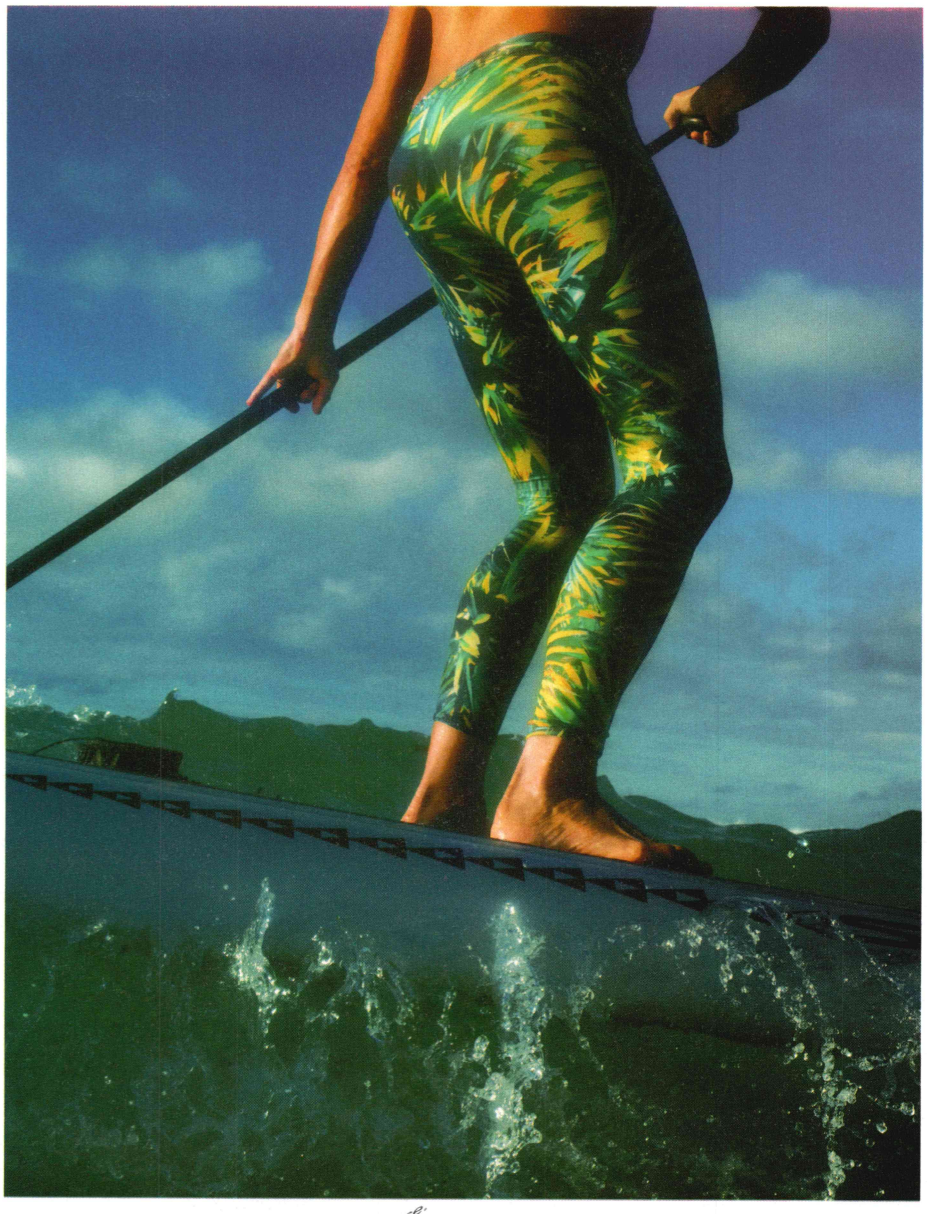
You can't make an appointment to go big-wave surfing. It's not like a tee time for golf.
You have no idea when the conditions are going to come together.
In February of 1999, my husband and I had a road trip planned,
but when I got out of class, he called and said,
"Mavericks is breaking. We should go before our trip."
It was a beautiful afternoon – low tide, and it was 25- to 30-foot faces.
It can be 50 or 60, so that was mellow.
The water is dark and cold and silty. Underwater, you don't have visibility. It's close to the rocks.
When the wave hits the reef and rears up,
suddenly you're looking two, three, four stories down –
that's when you have to stand. It continues to grow as you drop in,
so that by the time you've surfed part of the way down,
it's four to five stories. You actually go backwards a little bit in the beginning of the ride.
It sucks you up. And then all of a sudden, it releases.
Often you get air for a split second. And then you take off.

SARAH GERHARDT, 44, SANTA CRUZ

The first woman to surf Mavericks







With big-wave surfing, almost everyone has a job. Ten years ago, a car company offered to sponsor me to surf in Brazil. It was a huge deal, and I remember asking my dad for his advice. Should I do that or go to paramedic school for five years? He said, "School, because that'll hold fruit." When I'm at work as a paramedic, I'm there for 48 hours to save people's lives. When I finish my shift, my life revolves around the weather. I have my surfboards in the truck. If it's glassy and there are waves, I surf. If it's windy, I will be outrigger canoe paddling or I'll windsurf. At 1:30, I have to pick my daughter up from school.

ANDREA MOLLER, 38, NORTH SHORE OF MAUI

I've been surfing
for 23 years,
and there've been
a million times
when I was surfing
alone and some
dudes came
up and acted
like they owned
the place,
questioning
what I'm wearing,
my board.
If I were a guy, would they
have said anything?
There are so
many ways to be
deterred from
surfing.
You flip through
Surfer or *Stab*
magazine and you
only see men
surfers and a
bikini butt shot.
The support for female
athletes in the
magazines for
pro skiers or
climbers is more
on par.
Surfing is 20 years
behind.

BIANCA VALENTI, 32
SAN FRANCISCO





I'm an old man.

I don't like it when the water is too crowded. And I don't want to rush things.
That's why I'm ambivalent about competitions.
How can they declare the best big-wave surfer in the world after one hour?

EMILY ERICKSON, 28, NORTH SHORE OF OAHU













I'm constantly
doing maintenance —
keeping the
foundation
I built in the
gym happy.
I train for eight
weeks with a camp
for elite athletes.
We'll run at high
elevation at the
top of Haleakalā —
a mile down into
the crater of the
volcano and
then back up,
trying to keep
an even pace.
Running at
10,000 feet is the
hardest thing
I've ever done.
Your legs and lungs
are wrecked.
And we'll do rock running
with breath holds –
an hour of running
sprints 15 to 20 feet
underwater while
carrying a really
heavy rock.
Mine is probably 50,
60 pounds.
You're trying to
hold your breath under
strenuous conditions
because that's what
happens when
you're surfing.
It's as close to being held
down after a
wipeout as you can get.

PAIGE ALMS, 30,
NORTH SHORE OF MAUI

I've had some pretty horrific injuries.
The latest one was at Jaws [a big-wave competition in Maui]
in November 2016.
I took off late, took a really gnarly drop,
made it,
but then kind of went to grab the side of my board —
the rail — to direct myself back up the wave.
I hit a big side chop that went up
underneath my board.
I had to let go of my rail to adjust to the chop,
and it really slowed me down. I thought, *I got this.*
But what I didn't see was at 12 o'clock, above my head,
the hammer about to drop. The wave detonated on me, exploded me forward,
ripped me around underwater. I could feel pain shooting in my knee.
I didn't realize how bad it was initially.
End result: a complete tear of the popliteus muscle, a tiny muscle behind the kneecap.
I didn't even get back on a surfboard until June 2017.
I rode my first big wave again this past year.
I broke my board, but my body made it, so I look at it as a success.
KEALA KENNELLY, 39, HONOLULU



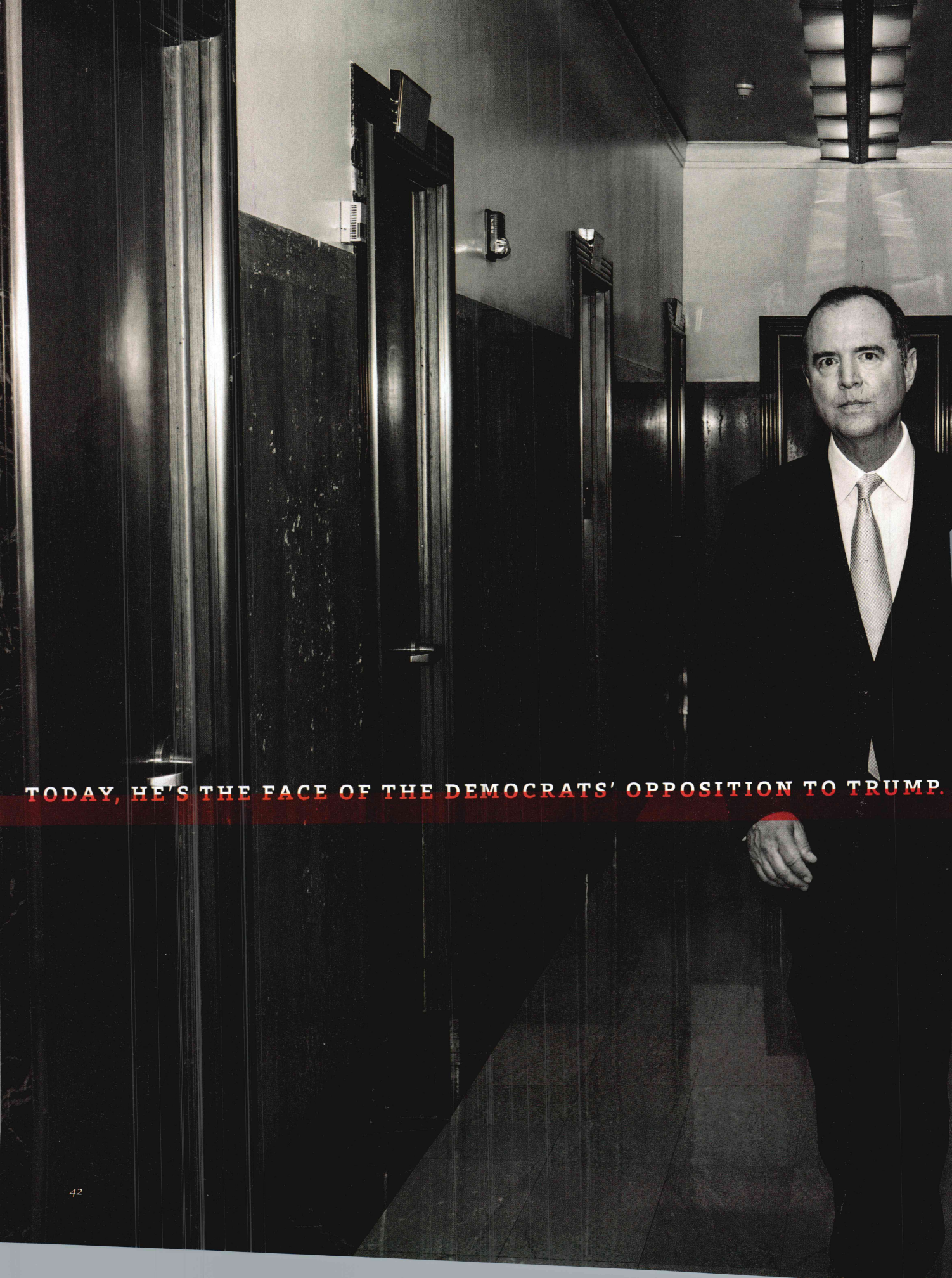
BONNIE TSUI is a contributor to *The New York Times* and the author of *American Chinatown*. Her book, *Why We Swim*, will be published next year by Algonquin Books.

ROSE MARIE CROMWELL is a photographer based in Miami. Her debut monograph, *El Libro Supremo de la Suerte*, will be published by TIS Books this fall.



TWO YEARS AGO, HE WAS

RESPECTED BUT LITTLE-KNOWN CONGRESSMAN FROM LOS ANGELES.



TODAY, HE'S THE FACE OF THE DEMOCRATS' OPPOSITION TO TRUMP.



THE QUIET ANGER OF ADAM SCHIFF

By Andy Kroll
Photographs by Kristine Potter

"I GOT A PICTURE! I GOT A PICTURE!" A middle-aged woman named Barb plops down into a chair, out of breath. She's wearing jeans, Crocs with painted toenails, and a T-shirt that says TRUMPCARE: IT'S TRUMP UNIVERSITY BUT YOU DIE. On an evening in late spring, she has staked out a front-row seat at a fundraiser for the Iowa Democratic Party held at a hotel on the wind-swept outskirts of Cedar Rapids. Barb's friends crowd around her as she swipes through photos of her and the evening's headliner, Congressman Adam Schiff.

The event was scheduled to begin 15 minutes ago, but Schiff is pinned in a far corner of the room, mobbed by party activists and local politicians who want to shake his hand or take another selfie. Schiff is here to raise money for Democratic candidates in Iowa in the run-up to the November midterms. He headlined a fundraiser in Des Moines earlier in the afternoon, and he was in St. Louis the day before on behalf of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, the party's main vehicle for winning back the House. Wherever Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and his Democratic colleagues need him, he'll go, and lately, that's meant just about everywhere.

After an introduction by the state party chairman, Schiff finally takes the stage. Dressed in a crisp blue suit and sensible dress shoes, he cultivates a cheerfully beleaguered demeanor. He speaks without notes and tells jokes the way a dad would if that dad had access to highly classified intelligence. (One involves confusing Trump adviser John Bolton with pop singer Michael Bolton, which elicits scattered laughter.) He doesn't raise his voice, doesn't try to fire up the crowd. But then he doesn't need to. The 175 people in attendance rise to their feet and applaud him without his saying a word.

Before Donald Trump's election, in 2016, Schiff was a respected if obscure member of Congress. In Washington, he had a reputation as an expert on national security and intelligence. People beyond the Beltway knew him, if they knew him at all, as the congressman with the Hollywood sign in his district or the one who shared a name with a beloved character on *Law & Order*. His admirers used words like "solid," "reasonable," and "mild-mannered." If there was a knock on him, it was that he was too solid, too reasonable, and too mild-mannered. The kind of guy who at the end of a long day removes his tie but leaves his collar buttoned at the neck.

Then came Trump. For the past 18 months, as the senior Democrat on the

SCHIFF'S WEAKNESSES HAVE BECOME HIS STRENGTHS. FOR MANY, HE IS THE SOBER NARRATOR IN A TIME WHEN MEMBERS OF BOTH PARTIES RESORT TO HYPERBOLE TO RILE UP THE BASE.

House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Schiff has played a leading part in the investigation into Russia's interference in our elections and possible collusion with Trump and his aides and associates. At the same time, he has worked to fend off the efforts by his Republican colleagues and Trump's media allies to derail the investigation. All this has vaulted Schiff into the unlikely role of being the Democrats' leader not just on the investigation but on all things Trump and Russia. He has become a fixture on cable TV and the Sunday talk shows, distilling and explaining the latest developments in the marquee saga of the Trump presidency.

In accordance with the inside-out logic of the era, Schiff's weaknesses have become his strengths. For many, he is the voice of reason, a steadying influence, the sober narrator in a time when chaos reigns, basic facts are under assault, and members of both parties resort to hyperbole and outrage to rile up the base. Strangers stop him on the street and at the airport and in the aisles of CVS to thank him. His Twitter following is rapidly approaching the 1-million mark, making him one of the most popular members of Congress on the platform. "There's such a desire for something you can hang on to in the midst of these gale-force winds, and there's a solidity to Schiff that is really appealing," David Axelrod, the former adviser to Barack Obama, told me. "At a time when everything seems to be going crazy, there is a sense of bland is beautiful."

The day before Schiff landed in Iowa, *The New York Times* had published a list of 49 questions drawn up by Trump's legal team that reflected what special counsel Robert Mueller hoped to ask Trump if the president sat for an interview. Before the audience in Cedar Rapids, Schiff riffed on this latest bit of news, and then, in what's become a trademark move, he urged his audience to step back from the fast-twitch news cycle and to remember the larger implications of the Russia story. "Even among Democrats, there is a tendency to think too narrowly about what this all means," he said, "that this was just about helping Donald Trump in the last election or just about hurting Hillary Clinton." But that line of thinking, he continued, misses the bigger picture. "This is part of Russian interference in nations throughout the world to undermine the very idea of democracy, and if we don't understand that, then the remedy is going to be the wrong one."

Schiff, who turned 58 in June, finds himself in an enviable, if strange, position: Thanks in no small part to the man he calls "the worst president in modern history," he has now become a political star. It's a turn of events that has taken almost everyone by surprise, none more so than Schiff himself. He had expected a Hillary Clinton presidency, he told me in one of our many conversations in the past year, and Clinton's people had said there might be a job for him in the new administration. Now, sitting in an empty lobby bar after his speech, he was still trying to make sense of recent events and his own place in them: "I would have not predicted this year or last."

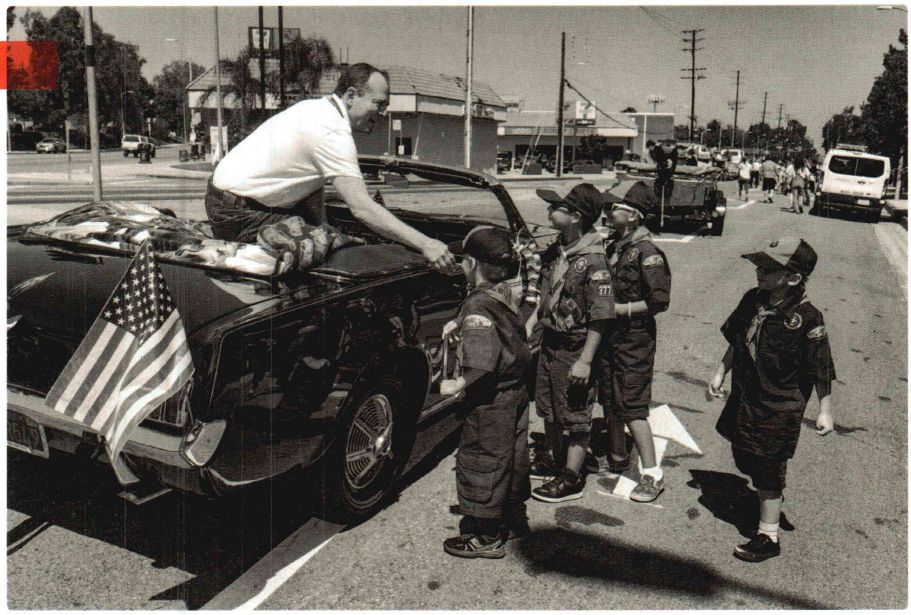
IN THE LATE SUMMER OF 2016, CIA Director John Brennan held a series of urgent meetings with a senior group of lawmakers known as the Gang of Eight. These legislators — the Democratic and Republican leaders in the House and Senate and the chairmen and ranking members of the House and Senate intelligence committees — receive periodic classified briefings from the executive branch; they're the first to know of major national-security threats and developments, the keepers of Congress's intelligence secrets. Schiff had joined the Gang of Eight in 2015, when he became the House intelligence committee's ranking Democrat.

Brennan came with alarming news: "Russia was engaged in aggressive and wide-ranging efforts to interfere in one of the key pillars of our democracy," as he later testified. The Russians were trying to elect Donald Trump, he said, and there was a possibility that they would hack individual states and manipulate their voting systems.

Schiff pushed for the Gang of Eight to issue a bipartisan statement and urged the Obama administration to warn the public. The Republicans, though, refused to join in, and the White House, fearful that anything it said would be perceived as partisan, chose to remain silent. Schiff and California Senator Dianne Feinstein, a colleague on the Gang of Eight, decided to go it alone. On September 22, 2016, they released a joint statement, the first by any government official on Russia's cyberattacks. Schiff's and Feinstein's staffs vetted each of its 129 words so as not to reveal classified information. "Based on briefings we have received, we have concluded that the Russian intelligence agencies are making a serious and concerted effort to influence the U.S. election," they wrote. "We believe that orders for the Russian intelligence agencies to conduct such actions could come only from very senior levels of the Russian government."

This was the first of many synchronicities for Schiff between the present and past. Born in Massachusetts in 1960, the youngest of two brothers,

THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE ISSUED A REPORT THIS YEAR TITLED "THE SCHIFF SHOW" — SAY IT ALOUD — THAT SAID HE'D CONDUCTED 227 TV INTERVIEWS OVER A 13-MONTH SPAN, A FIGURE HIS OFFICE DOESN'T DISPUTE.



Schiff eschewed family tradition by picking Stanford over Dartmouth. He went on to attend Harvard Law School. Not long after graduation, he joined the U.S. Attorney's office in Los Angeles. There, he was put on the case of Richard Miller, an agent in the FBI's counterintelligence unit, who had fallen for a Soviet spy, passing her secret documents in exchange for cash, gold, and sex. The government had failed twice to convict Miller. Under fierce pressure, Schiff was brought in to win the third trial, which he did. Miller was sentenced to 20 years in prison, the first time an FBI agent had ever been convicted of espionage. That the bureau didn't close ranks after such an embarrassing breach, but instead devoted dozens of agents to solve the case, left a strong impression on Schiff. So, too, did the national attention. Politicians and other government officials had called Schiff to offer whatever resources they could. "'Dad, I will never have another case like that in my life,'" Schiff's father, Ed, recounted to a reporter years later. "'I'm going into politics.'"

Karl Thurmond, who met Schiff at Harvard Law, was one of his closest friends in Los Angeles and used to get together with Schiff every week. Once, when they were jogging down San Vicente Boulevard, Thurmond says Schiff told him he wanted to run for president one day. "He denies ever having said that," Thurmond told me. "But I know he did."

In 1991, Schiff entered a special election for an open state Assembly seat. The decision surprised his colleagues. He was a capable and talented prosecutor, but few people who knew him saw a politician-in-waiting. Brian Hennigan, who worked alongside Schiff in the U.S. Attorney's office, recalls him giving a woeful speech at an early fundraiser. "He didn't pander or try to appeal to the people in the audience," Hennigan told me. "He just said what he thought and what he would do and that was that. I remember people putting their checkbooks back into their bags as they listened to him talk."

A San Diego consultant Schiff had hired on the cheap came up with the slogan "Criminals Beware," a nod to





Schiff and constituents at a Fourth of July parade in his district

the law-and-order politics of the 1990s. Schiff spent much of his time knocking on doors in the hardest-hit areas, which may have seemed logical to a prosecutor but was disastrous as a campaign strategy. He finished 11th out of 13 candidates. "Adam called me up and said, 'Clearly, I don't know what I'm doing, but I'd like to have a career in elected office,'" the political consultant Parke Skelton recalls. "'What do I need to do?'"

Schiff ran for state Assembly again in 1994 and narrowly lost. Then, two years later, he announced his candidacy for a state Senate seat. His friends worried that if he was defeated a third time he'd be labeled a perennial loser; his political career would be over before it started. But with Skelton on board, he finally won, and he soon earned a reputation in Sacramento as a workaholic eager to make a name for himself. After only two years there, he caught the eye of Democratic donors and strategists.



David Geffen, the Hollywood music mogul, was fuming as he watched Bill Clinton's impeachment on TV. One of the Republican leaders in the trial was a boisterous congressman named Jim Rogan, who represented Burbank and Pasadena. Geffen called one of his advisers and asked: "Can we beat this guy?" Within a few months, Schiff was recruited to run against Rogan, and he had the full backing of Los Angeles's Democratic establishment. Geffen and Steven Spielberg hosted his first fundraiser; early donors included DreamWorks co-founder Jeffrey Katzenberg, *Power Rangers* creator Haim Saban, and former MCA chair Lew Wasserman. Schiff's roommate in Sacramento and fellow Democratic state senator Jack O'Connell remembers Schiff spending every morning — 5 a.m. to 8 a.m. — calling Washington, D.C., on the house landline and asking for support.

The backdrop of Clinton's impeachment — and Rogan's prominent role in it — helped Schiff raise nearly $5 million from 30,000 donors. On the campaign trail, though, he presented himself as a middle-of-the-road Democrat focused on local issues. When asked by *The New York Times* to name a member of Congress he admired, he said Sam Nunn, a centrist Democrat from Georgia, who had recently retired from the Senate and was known for his expertise in national security; when asked for a second example of someone he admired, Schiff said Sam Nunn. By Election Day, the two candidates had spent $11.6 million — the most of any House race in history at the time. Schiff won by nearly nine points.

When Schiff got to Washington, he was given some advice. A new

congressman could be one of three things: a pothole guy, a political operator, or a specialist. Pothole guys focus on sending money back to the district. Political operators get involved in electing more Democrats to Congress. Specialists pick an issue — taxes, the budget, education — and become experts in it. Schiff, who had gotten a taste of foreign policy and intelligence in the Richard Miller case, decided to be a specialist. When the attacks of September 11 occurred eight months into his first term, Schiff saw a vacuum in the Democratic Party and an opening for himself.

Since Vietnam, there hadn't been much focus among Democrats on national security, Schiff told me. "I was also mindful of the fact that we were going to be locked out of the White House and the majority if the country didn't trust Democrats to keep the country safe." He formed a group with fellow Democrats to study national security and sought out people like Feinstein, a top Democrat on the Senate intelligence committee. He impressed then-Speaker Nancy Pelosi enough that, in 2008, she put him on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, a prestigious assignment. Still, there was no reason to think Schiff would become anything more than an influential insider and policy expert whom few people had heard of.

The House intelligence committee (referred to in Congress as HIP-see) stands apart from the cliquey culture of Capitol Hill. The staffers work side by side regardless of party in a secure, windowless office suite, known as "the Bunker," three floors below the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center. Anyone entering must hand over his phone, Fitbit, and any other electronic storage device. There is no natural light, so staffers use UV lights to care for their office plants. ("Pale and ill-fed" is how Schiff describes the staff.) Until the past two years, most reports and bills produced by the committee were bipartisan.

Schiff found his calling down in the Bunker. The gravity of the work spoke to his lawyerly side, and the committee's nonpartisan tradition appealed to the centrist in him. In 2015, when he was named its ranking member, he saw the position as a four-year commitment, and he decided to pass up the chance to run for the Senate in 2016 after Barbara Boxer chose to retire.

Soon, he found himself thrust into the most contentious issue of his time in Congress. Two weeks after Schiff and Feinstein released their statement about Russian interference, the Obama administration finally released its own, blaming "Russia's senior-most officials" for the hack-and-dump operation targeting the Democratic National Committee and the Clinton campaign. Schiff felt that calling out the Russians was the best way to stop them, and he thought it had been a terrible mistake for the White House to be silent for so long, but he was still confident that Hillary Clinton would win.

On election night, Schiff and his staff watched the returns at the Burbank Bar and Grille, a favorite haunt. After Trump's victory was called, Schiff says the mood was funereal. When he gathered his staff together back in D.C., a few days later, he struggled to find the words to reassure them. Half-jokingly, he said, "We're all f---ed."

ON THE MORNING of March 20, 2017, two months to the day after Trump's inauguration, the House intelligence committee held the first public hearing of its newly launched investigation into Russia's attacks on the United States. Visitors, staff, and reporters filled every seat in Room 1100 in the Longworth congressional building for what was, by Washington, D.C., standards, a blockbuster. The coverage of the hearing would focus almost exclusively on FBI Director James Comey's decision to confirm for the first time that the bureau had an open investigation into members of Trump's presidential campaign. But a different sort of drama played out opposite Comey, between the Democratic and Republican members of the committee.

For weeks leading up to the hearing, the Democrats and their staffs had met to plot out and choreograph their lines of questioning. Each member would focus on one facet of the Trump-Russia controversy without any overlap or confusion. That strategy, coupled with Schiff's lengthy opening and closing statements laying out the known facts of the case, showed just how seriously the Democrats were approaching the investigation. By their own admission, the Republicans were as haphazard as the Democrats were organized. Schiff later told me that Republicans he'd talked to had described the first public hearing as a calamity.

Two days after the hearing, Republican Devin Nunes of California, the chairman of the intelligence committee, held an impromptu press conference. He told reporters he had seen classified documents supporting President Trump's claim that the Obama administration had spied on members of his transition team. Nunes hadn't shared the information with Schiff nor had he given him an advance warning about the press conference; both actions broke with the norms that had guided the committee for decades.

Nunes wouldn't reveal the source of the information, but he said he had shared the material with the White House. It soon emerged that Nunes had lied — that the material had come from the White House itself during a dead-of-night visit. Schiff held his own press conference declaring that Nunes's "midnight run"



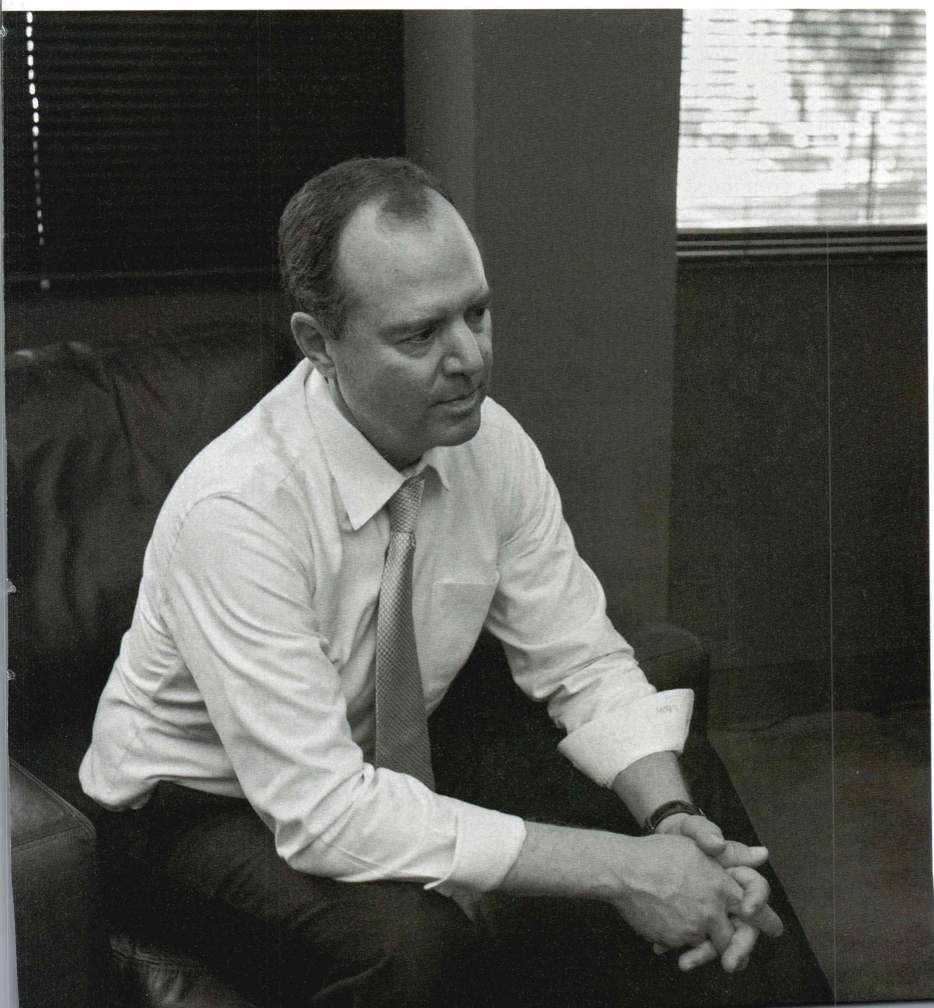
Long before Donald Trump was elected, Schiff was focusing on national security.

had compromised him — that he was conspiring with the subject of an investigation that he was leading. An ethics probe was opened into whether Nunes had disclosed classified information, and he agreed to step aside until it was completed.

Schiff asked the White House if he could examine the same documents it had shown Nunes but received no response. A week after Nunes's press conference, Schiff was watching TV in the Bunker when the White House announced that it had sent him a letter inviting him to view the documents. "You did?" Schiff said to the TV. "What letter?"

On cue, an aide walked in with the letter, which had arrived moments earlier. Schiff and his then–staff director, Michael Bahar, drove to the White House and met with staffers from the National Security Council. Schiff could examine the documents, he was told, but Bahar couldn't. This was another break from the norm: Members of the intelligence committee typically review classified information in the presence of staff, so there's a witness present. The two sides argued until a Trump aide intervened. "The president wants to speak to you" — pointing to Schiff — "in the Oval Office. But he" — pointing to Bahar — "can't come."

FOR YEARS, SCHIFF AND REPUBLICAN INTELLIGENCE CHAIR DEVIN NUNES HAD WORKED WELL TOGETHER. THEY EVEN HAD MATCHING OAKLAND RAIDERS JERSEYS. BUT NUNES'S "MIDNIGHT RUN" OPENED A SCHISM BETWEEN THEM.



Schiff walked to the Oval Office, and President Trump greeted him. "The first thing he said to me was, 'You do a really good job,'" Schiff told me. "I felt very awkward." When Schiff told Trump that he was having trouble bringing his staffer with him to view the documents, the president said he didn't have any problem with that. Schiff heard groans from the aides behind him, including then–chief of staff Reince Priebus.

After viewing the documents, Schiff and Bahar walked back to their car, parked in the driveway of the White House, and sat inside, trying to make sense of what had just happened. The documents did not confirm Trump's accusation that the Obama administration had wiretapped his transition team. But Schiff also couldn't reveal what the documents did say or he'd be disclosing classified intelligence. In that moment, he later told me, it hit him that he was enmeshed in an investigation-cum-spectacle unlike anything he'd experienced.

One reason the entire episode was so shocking was that, for years, Schiff and Nunes had worked well together. One newspaper called it "something of a bromance." They even had matching Oakland Raiders jerseys with their names and district numbers on the back. But in Schiff's eyes, the midnight run opened a schism between them that he feared was irreparable. →

SCHIFF FINDS HIMSELF IN AN ENVIABLE, IF STRANGE, POSITION: THANKS IN NO SMALL PART TO THE MAN HE CALLS "THE WORST PRESIDENT IN MODERN HISTORY," HE HAS NOW BECOME A POLITICAL STAR.

Being in the minority, Schiff had no subpoena power and no authority to lead the investigation on his own. But he could speak out — about the investigation's latest developments, about related news outside of the committee, and about what he saw as a coordinated attempt to derail the probe. Schiff had gone on TV shows like *Meet the Press* in the past, but in the weeks and months that followed, he became a regular guest on MSNBC and CNN and NPR. The Republican National Committee began tracking his media appearances and issued a report this year titled "The Schiff Show" — say it aloud — that said he'd conducted 227 TV interviews over a 13-month span, a figure his office doesn't dispute.

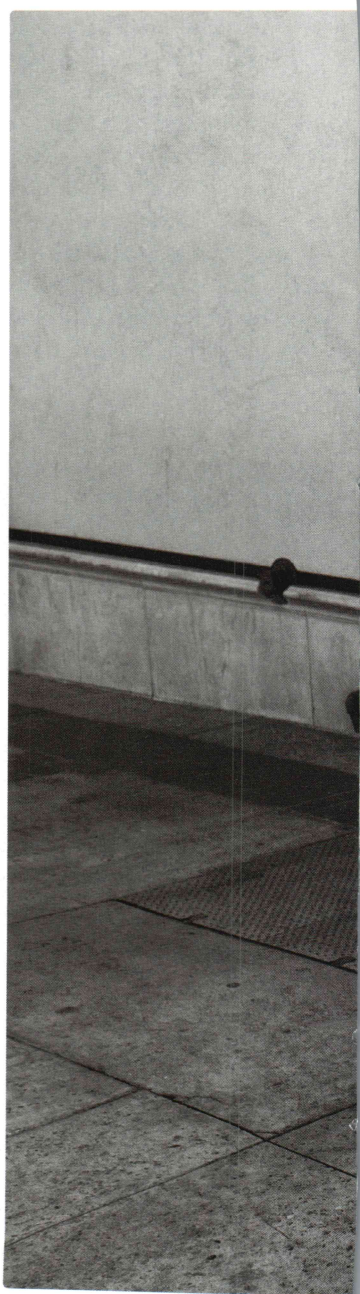
Becoming a ubiquitous media presence wasn't a snap decision, Schiff says, but a gradual realization that what he was learning was so complex, it required someone to explain it, put it in context, and remind the public how it all fit together. As one of his Democratic colleagues likes to say, if Watergate was algebra, this was calculus. How Schiff presented himself, though, was a conscious strategy. He had a theory: He would have to speak calmly or people would just tune him out amid the noise of the Trump presidency. "The situation is so worrying or alarming, it would be easy to be in a panic about it all of the time," he told me. "But I think to break through the clutter, you have to speak in rational terms or people will just disregard what you have to say."

His presence on TV was a sharp contrast to the frenzy of cable news. He had a knack for taking thorny subjects and presenting them in digestible form. Pressed by CNN's Jake Tapper on whether there was proof that people close to Trump had colluded with Russia, Schiff rattled off from memory all the times Russia approached the Trump campaign offering the hacked Clinton emails, the campaign's eagerness to obtain those emails, and the interactions between the campaign and WikiLeaks, which eventually published the emails online. Proving a criminal conspiracy, Schiff said, was Mueller's job. "But we do know this: The Russians offered help. The campaign accepted help. The Russians gave help. And the president made full use of that help," he told Tapper. "You would have to believe that these were all isolated incidents, not connected to each other. It just doesn't make rational sense."

The more Schiff spoke out, the bigger his following grew, which made him even more in demand to speak out. There's a phrase used by actors, "Feel your light," that Michael Bahar, his former aide, uses to describe Schiff's decision to seize this moment. "If you talk to him, he feels his light," Bahar says. "He feels that this is the moment history has called him to play."

"I always try to bring it back to the bigger picture of what's taking place," Schiff told me. Yes, the Russians are trying to undermine the idea of liberal democracy around the world. "But there's also the danger from within: The president's attacks on the free press, the justice system, his belittling of 'so-called judges,' the degrees to which he's interfering with the Justice Department," he went on. "That's the other part of this that needs exposure. What the Russians did was bad enough. What we're doing to ourselves is worse. We have to push back against both."

As Schiff's profile soared, though, the House intelligence committee's investigation was heading toward collapse. From the start, Schiff had said he wanted the committee's final report to be bipartisan — an aide of his told me last year that anything less would be "a disaster" — but the prospects of that dimmed with each month. President Trump used Twitter to disparage the investigation and demand that it be shut down. ("DO SOMETHING!" was a typical Trump tweet.) In December, Nunes was cleared of any ethics violations, and he escalated parallel investigations into alleged corruption and anti-Trump bias in the Justice Department and the FBI. Schiff and the Democrats



saw these efforts as a tactic to undermine the work of Robert Mueller and distract from Russia. At this point, Schiff told me, the committee was bringing in as many witnesses for its side investigations as it was for the Russia investigation. "They have gone into hyperdrive to put the government on trial," he said, "which is what a defense attorney does when the facts for their client are really bad."

Schiff's staff got in the habit of watching Fox News each evening to learn what Nunes had planned for the next day. The leaks coming out of the committee grew so frequent that the Senate intelligence committee's top Republican and Democrat issued a plea for their counterparts in the House to stop their infighting. In March, Nunes ended the investigation, later releasing a final report without any Democratic input. It found that there was no collusion and that there was no evidence Russia intended to help Trump, despite the four major intelligence agencies all concluding that the opposite

As media requests have piled up over the past 18 months, Schiff has strategized about how he should come across.



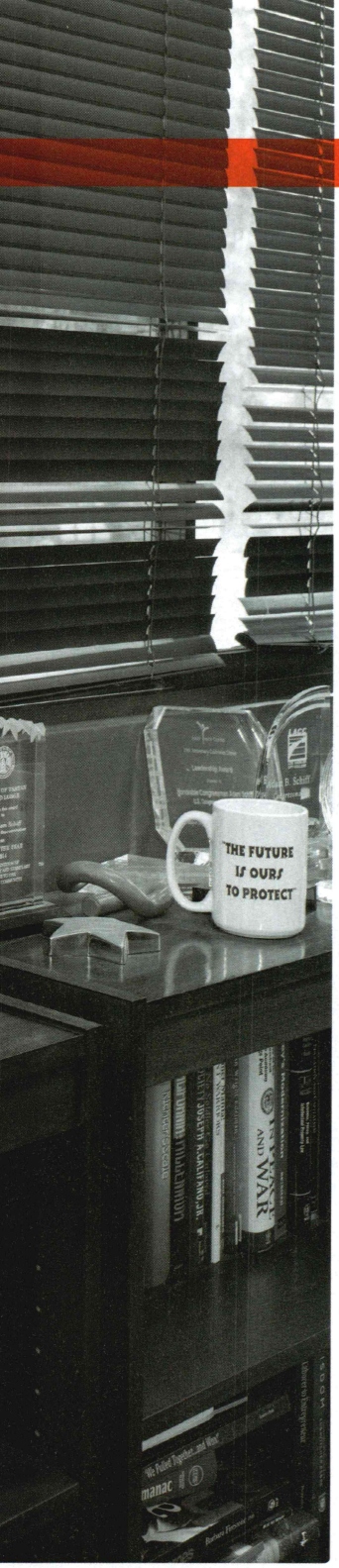
was true. By that point, it wasn't the Russian effort to sow discord that seemed to trouble Schiff most. It was the unwillingness of Republicans to stand up to the president publicly, even though some had privately urged him to push the investigation forward.

Most of Schiff's Republican colleagues declined to be interviewed about him. But Congressman Trey Gowdy of South Carolina, a former prosecutor like Schiff, told me he saw a double standard in his actions. He noted that Schiff was now calling for transparency and bipartisanship after he spent two and a half years obstructing the Benghazi investigation that Gowdy had led. He accused Schiff of dismissing or avoiding lines of investigation in the Russia probe — like who paid for the infamous Steele dossier — that could implicate the Democratic Party. "I think Adam's a good lawyer," Gowdy said. "I think he's an even better politician." (Schiff responded in a statement: "I did work on a completely bipartisan investigation of Benghazi — on the House intelligence committee led by Republican Mike Rogers. We worked together well and came to a bipartisan conclusion. The Benghazi Select Committee, chaired by Trey Gowdy, had a partisan and illegitimate purpose from the beginning as [Majority Leader] Kevin McCarthy acknowledged: It was designed only to tear down Hillary Clinton's poll numbers.")

Schiff and his Democratic colleagues on the committee say they will press on with their own Russia investigation. There's an obvious incentive to keep it alive until November: If Democrats win back the House, Schiff would become chair and have subpoena power.



IT WAS ONLY a matter of time before Schiff found himself in the blast zone of a tweet by President Trump: "Sleazy Adam Schiff, the totally biased Congressman looking into 'Russia,' spends all of his time on television pushing the Dem loss excuse!" A day later, Schiff was sitting in his Capitol Hill office, unable to suppress a smile. He seemed equal parts disturbed and flattered by Trump's attack. "I've been getting a lot of feedback from my colleagues who are quite envious of



Schiff's office in Burbank

AMONG TRUMP SUPPORTERS, SCHIFF HAS BECOME A BÊTE NOIRE. FOX NEWS HOST TUCKER CARLSON CALLED HIM "A LIAR AND A DEMAGOGUE." CONSPIRACY THEORIST ALEX JONES THREATENED HIM WITH BODILY HARM.

me," he told me. "Some of my committee colleagues are threatening to make a button that says I'M WITH SLEAZY."

The president is far from the only one to take aim at Schiff. Among Trump supporters, he has become a bête noire. Fox News host Tucker Carlson called him "a liar and a demagogue." Conspiracy theorist Alex Jones threatened him with bodily harm during an on-air rant. (Jones later said his comments were "clearly tongue-in-cheek and basically art performance.") Recently, Schiff was back in his district when he heard a man yell from across the street, "There's that a--hole! There's that son of a bitch, Adam Schiff!" This has only made his following all the more fervent. "In many ways, I feel like a human focus group now," he says.

Schiff's office is unusual in the number of staff who have worked for him for ten years or more, and they have noticed a change in how he's received. "He used to be just Adam," Tim Bergreen, a senior aide on the intelligence committee and former longtime chief of staff, told me. "Now, I call him Mr. Schiff sometimes, not to his face. He's a serious national figure now, not just the congressman I've been working for for a while."

Schiff says that the Russia investigation has typecast him — that it overshadows his years of expertise in national security — but he also acknowledges that it has given him newfound stature. He's so popular with the Democratic base that by May he'd raised $2.4 million for the party's congressional candidates. At the same time, he has urged progressives to be more cautious about wanting to impeach Trump. This was another of those synchronicities — the backlash to Clinton's impeachment had helped him get elected to Congress.

He had considered running for Senate this year if Feinstein decided to retire, but he put those plans on hold when she chose to seek a fifth term. (A popular rumor making the rounds in Washington and California is that Feinstein wants to serve long enough to see Trump out of office and then persuade the governor to pick Schiff as her replacement. Schiff's office wouldn't comment. Feinstein says she's committed to serving the full term.) And were the Democrats to regain the White House, Schiff surely would be on the shortlist for CIA chief or director of national intelligence. That his rapid ascent would not have happened without Trump is an irony he recognizes but says he doesn't dwell on. "I feel no sense of moral ambiguity about what I'm doing," he told me.

What worries him the most, he says, is that the various Russia investigations, whenever they're finished, won't make any difference. Over the past year, Schiff has been listening to the first season of the podcast *Slow Burn*, about the Watergate scandal. The parallels he found between Watergate and Russia were striking: a Democratic National Committee break-in, conspiracy theorists on both sides, a president fueled by paranoia. During our last conversation, he brought up the tapes that marked the tipping point in the scandal and led to Nixon's resignation. "Even if we had tapes today," Schiff told me, "Trump has something Nixon didn't have. Trump has Fox News and a whole alternate-information ecosystem that his die-hard supporters can live in. It may be the case that if Nixon had that, he never would have been forced out of office. That's a pretty startling realization." §

ANDY KROLL is a contributing writer to *The California Sunday Magazine* and Washington bureau chief for *Rolling Stone*.

KRISTINE POTTER was born in Dallas and currently resides in Nashville. Her first monograph, *Manifest*, was recently published by TBW Books.



On the

North Korean women have
been escaping to the South in
search of freedom and happier lives.

Other Side

But what happens when
hope leads to disappointment?

BY ANN BABE

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
HOKYOUNG KIM



Years ago in Yonsa, a small North Korean town near the Chinese border, residents gathered to watch a man die. Executioners tied him by his neck, chest, and waist to a log in the town square, then shot 90 bullets into him. When it was over, all that remained were two legs.

The man, an executive at a trading company, had been ratted out for illegally cutting down and selling trees to China. When the police came to his property, they found his ceiling papered with money and a getaway boat filled with wads of cash. Or so the story goes among locals.

But it was what became of this man's daughter that haunted a 12-year-old Kim So Won.* The daughter was tall and beautiful and made small but daring fashion statements. "I remember she wore earrings and tight jeans," says So Won, "and she wore a tight red jacket" — none of which was officially allowed in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Rumors circulated that the girl could jump incredible distances, that she could fly across a room. "She was a star."

Then one day, in 2007, not long after her father was publicly executed, the daughter vanished. No one ever saw or heard from her again. But So Won would always remember the earrings, the skinny jeans, the red jacket.

THE VIEW IN every direction from So Won's home in Yonsa was dominated by mountains dotted with potatoes in the autumn and strawberries in the spring. The range they called "the gasping mountain" barricaded Yonsa from the Tumen River; in some ways, it felt like a prison wall. Across that water was China and the rest of the world. Being so close to another life, in a way inland North Koreans were not, was the hardest part.

With two rooms and a plot of land for growing vegetables, the Kims' home was spacious by North Korean standards. So Won lived with her middle sister, So Yeon, who was three years older, along with their mother and father, an engineer who later became the town drunk. "It was such a waste for him to live in North Korea," So Won says. "He was always drinking to avoid reality."

The reality was that North Korea's system had long ago ceased to function: Its economy had stalled, its government was desperate, and its people were growing increasingly aware that their lives had changed for the worse. From 1945 — when the Korean Peninsula was split by the U.S. and the Soviet Union following the Japanese occupation — until the 1970s, North Korea was the richer of the two nations. The communist North enjoyed a better infrastructure and a stronger economy than the democratic South; some Koreans living abroad who had the choice of either country, including So Won's grandfather who'd moved to Japan, opted to claim citizenship in the North.

But over the following decades, life in North Korea shifted drastically. The fall of the Soviet Union led to the collapse of the economy. A series of floods and droughts culminated in the Great Famine, or "arduous march," as it was called, from 1994 to 1998. The famine — along with the regime's human rights abuses, mismanagement of foreign aid, and funneling of money toward its nuclear program — starved and killed 330,000 North Koreans, according to conservative estimates.

The system, which had assigned citizens to state jobs and distributed coupons to buy food and other rations at state stores, started to crumble. A new class of workers emerged, often the women without official posts to report to who could discreetly find off-the-books employment. Women who lived in the northern reaches of the country sometimes crossed into China.

So Won's eldest sister, nine years her senior, fled there to do odd jobs when So Won was a small child. Their mother worked there as a caretaker and sent her wages back home. Her time in China changed everything. "She couldn't stop earning money," So Won says. She had planned to stay for one month but ended up working for more than a year.

THERE IS A saying on the Korean Peninsula that the greatest threat to the Joseon Rodongdang, North Korea's ruling party, is the country's other *dang* — the *jangmadang*, or black market.

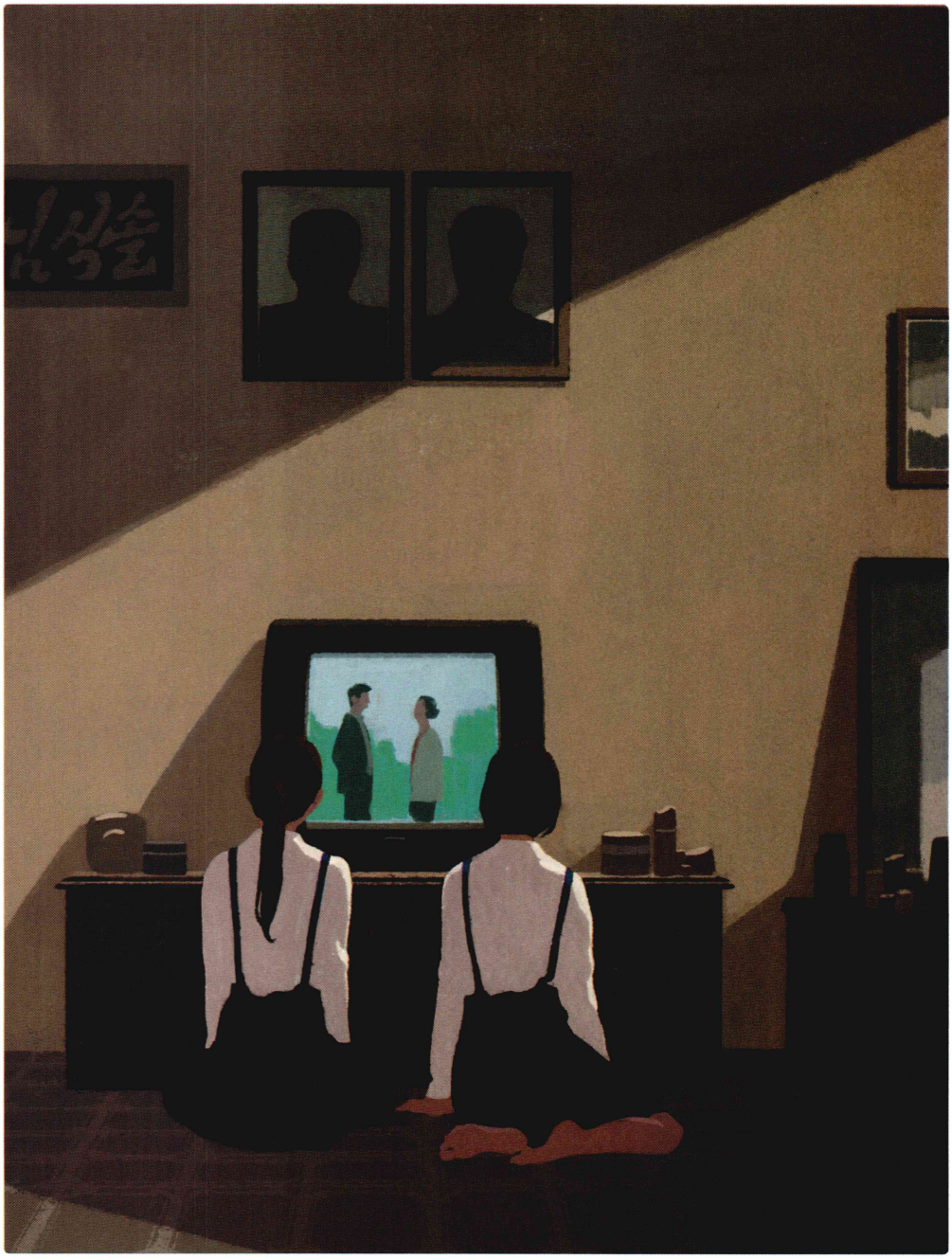
Growing up, So Won and So Yeon lived out fantasies of better, more extravagant lives through whatever black-market goods they could afford. The country dictates everything from the propaganda posters hanging in people's homes to the way they dress. For most North Korean women, the dress code is generally black trousers or skirts, never above the knee, and modest shirts. They are allowed to wear basic makeup (foundation, powder) and, recently, stud earrings. But they cannot drastically alter their hair, or style it too long or too short.

Mostly, So Won and So Yeon followed the rules and wore their school uniforms of dark pleated skirts with suspenders over plain white blouses. When they weren't in class, they swapped their skirts for black pants, and for flair, they ran a hot iron over them until the creases were extra sharp, or tailored them to be slightly more fitted at the hips.

Every once in a while, the sisters would hear that a neighbor had gone to China and smuggled back kilos of used clothes. It was a frantic dash to that neighbor's house, with buyers grabbing a pile, any pile, and paying for it before they could examine what it contained. So Won and her sister always hoped to find a red jacket and a pair of skinny jeans.

So Won did own a knockoff Adidas tracksuit and black jeans dyed so dark they almost didn't look like denim at all. She had to be careful about where she wore them. Inspectors with scissors roamed the town cutting jeans, which were seen as a symbol of American imperialism. Spies were

* *Names have been changed.*



everywhere. So Won's mother even suspected one of So Won's friends of being an informant.

One day, So Yeon went to the black market to buy something she'd been saving up for. She and her sister had purchased perfumes and face creams before, but it was something even more special this time: eye makeup. When she sneaked back into the house, she caught So Won's gaze. *Come, come, come!* She mouthed the words, her head motioning toward the other room. They hid behind a desk and removed the caps from the makeup stick. One end was a wand with bristles, the other a triangle of black coal. In hushed tones, they painted each other's lashes and drew around each other's eyes.

Movies are seen as such an effective catalyst for defection that they're often floated across the DMZ attached to balloons.

They turned their focus to the glittering eyeshadow, looking at it quizzically. *What is this? What do we do with it?* They weren't sure, so they put it away unopened. Then they went outside to play around their house, where no one would see them.

The sisters also bought bootlegged movies and TV shows, which are seen as such an effective catalyst for defection that they're often floated across the DMZ attached to balloons or bobbed across the sea in bottles. It was when 49-year-old Kang Mi Jin watched *Promise*, a South Korean action-romance, that she realized her government had lied to her all her life. She'd always been taught the South was impoverished, filled with beggars holding out tin cans. But not only was the country depicted as wealthy, the filmmakers could afford to destroy entire sets during fight scenes. She watched *Promise* eight times, enamored by the amount of money the male protagonist spent on winning his love interest's heart. "It's that movie that made me decide to escape," she says.

So Won and So Yeon's favorite movie was *Dream of the Red Chamber*, not because of the storyline about a wealthy Chinese family — "It was boring" — but because of the beautiful women dressed in even more beautiful clothing. So Won remembers animated films like *Cinderella* and *Beauty and the Beast* for their "luxurious dresses," and a movie called *So Close* for the female protagonist's smart tailored pantsuit, glossy hair, and meticulously made-up face.

Sitting in their living room with the curtains drawn, they watched every scene, each more glamorous than the last. They marveled over the endless choice splashed across the screen. They admired the glint of jewelry, the sparkle of makeup. If they someday made it to South Korea, they thought, they'd have all those things. →

"When I was in North Korea, I never thought I was ugly, but living here made me think I was ugly all the time."



AFTER THE Great Famine, people started fleeing to South Korea in greater numbers. The language used to describe those roughly 31,500 who have resettled in the South is politically complicated. In China, they are "economic migrants." In the Republic of Korea, among most Koreans, both North and South, they're *talbukcha*, or "person who escaped the North." In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, no word exists.

A vast majority of talbukcha — Ministry of Unification figures say 71 percent overall and 83 percent in 2017 — are women. They often escape across the border into China and then make their way to Southeast Asia, where they can officially request protection at a South Korean Embassy. If caught in China or the communist countries of Laos and Vietnam, talbukcha are at risk of repatriation to North Korea, where they'll face imprisonment, forced labor, torture, or execution. Few can successfully get to an embassy on their own. Some enlist the help of nonprofit or religious rescue groups. Others use brokers, who smuggle them for a fee of anywhere between $2,500 and $16,000.

On her last morning in North Korea, in 2009, So Won, then 14, woke up early, and she and her mother left home without saying a word, even to her father. The only person she said goodbye to was her sister, who had plans to escape later and meet them near Seoul. "I'll see you soon," So Won told her.

Two months later, after going through China and then Thailand (So Won's mother paid brokers about $8,000), So Won sat in a sterile room at the South Korean National Intelligence Service in Seoul. She was quarantined, undergoing the routine interrogation to prove she wasn't an enemy of the state. A man and a woman asked her all about her life in North Korea. *Describe your house. Draw your hometown. Talk about your school. Be specific. Tell us more.*

After the National Intelligence Service came the Hanawon Resettlement Center, the agency charged with handling the intake of North Korean defectors and giving them three months of mandatory citizen training before releasing them into society. They also assign North Koreans a city and accommodations, show them how to open a bank account, pay bills, shop for necessities, use public transit, go to school, and get a job. Talbukcha receive the equivalent of $6,200 in initial resettlement support paid in allotments (plus $11,700 to put toward the country's expensive apartment down-payment requirements) and then a monthly living allowance of about $380 for the first six months.

After a 12-week course in democracy, capitalism, and the ultracompetitive South Korean lifestyle — along with a health screening and some vocational counseling — So Won and her mother were discharged from Hanawon. They were sent to Cheonan, a city about 50 miles south of Seoul, with a couple bags and a few thousand dollars to their name.

SO WON'S FIRST glimpses of South Korean consumerism came as an assault. Dongdaemun Market, in the heart of Seoul, was a crowded, chaotic scene. She worried she stuck out, that everyone could tell she was a talbukcha. Saleswomen shouted, their words a collection of flattened vowels; they pushed clothing and accessories at her and asked with what seemed like suspicion, "Are you Korean?"

At that time, So Won was *chonseureopda*, or "a country bumpkin," she says. "Sometimes I can recognize defectors — like, 'Oh, they came recently' — by looking at their outfits. It's something unnatural. It doesn't match at all. Because North Korean people have no sense of fashion."

Getting her hair done for the first time was its own form of humiliation. She'd dreamed of having long, silky locks, but she didn't know where to go. She ended up walking into a cheap *miyongshil*, where an older woman straightened her strands with chemicals that damaged her hair. Buying makeup was even harder. She had no concept of what looked good on her. All she knew was that she wanted to copy Olympic figure skater Kim Yuna, even if it cost her about $20 to buy her signature fuchsia lipstick. After leaving the shop, So Won excitedly applied it, only to find it made her look sallow and garish. She never wore it again but was too ashamed to throw it away because it had cost a quarter of her monthly spending budget.

To blend into South Korean life, many women, like So Won, scramble to change their hair, their makeup, their clothing, their accents. "We want to look like ordinary South Koreans," says So Won. Standing out as North Korean only invites prejudice. There is a widespread stereotype in South Korea that talbukcha are lazy, ignorant, prone to alcoholism, and a drain on the welfare state. North Koreans who move south are confronted by a people who are unfathomably foreign. The growing cultural and economic divides also mirror decreasing support for reunification. Older South Koreans remember a time when the two countries were one and treat peace talks with more optimism than their grandchildren. (A majority of the South Korean population viewed unification as necessary in 2017, but among those in their 20s, it's just 38.9 percent.)

For Kim Ga Young, a 27-year-old North Korean student who moved to Seoul in 2013, the first step toward assimilation was to dye her hair caramel brown and buy new makeup. It was daunting. At the store, with a seemingly endless array of products all around her, she felt paralyzed. "I thought, *If I can't even pick one lipstick, how can I live here?*" Her friend opened a bottle of nail polish and, not knowing what it was, smeared it across her mouth.

"I thought I was never going to be pretty in South Korea," says So Won. Still, she didn't want to change anything about her face, even when South Koreans suggested double-eyelid surgery, a common procedure, or told her to remove the mole in the middle of her chin. "When I was in North Korea, I never thought I was ugly, but living here made me think I was ugly all the time."

IN THE NEARLY nine years she's been in the South, So Won has lost her North Korean accent. Through a nonprofit called Teach North Korean Refugees, she's learned English, since the South has integrated English words into its language while the North has not. Mostly, she feels settled, yet: "I still feel something is missing." That, of course, is the rest of her family. Last year, So Won heard from old neighbors that her father had died.

Because So Won feels divided by an "invisible wall" from her South Korean peers, she mostly sticks to her North Korean community. She has North Korean friends and a North Korean boyfriend. Many talbukcha like So Won end up moving from their placement cities to the greater Seoul area in neighborhoods where they can meet North Korean neighbors, join North Korean groups, and eat North Korean foods like *injogogibap*, a Great Famine invention of rice and artificial meat. So Won lives with her mother, who has had a harder time adjusting, as can be the case with older defectors. "Her mindset is still North Korean," So Won says. She can't seem to shake her North Korean accent, either.

Though South Korea can feel like an unaccepting place, So Won enjoys as much of it as she can for the sake of her sister. It was in her second year in South Korea that So Won realized her sister wouldn't be joining her. She and her mother had been getting updates from So Yeon that she was leaving North Korea, was en route across China, was about to reach the border of Myanmar. But then the updates stopped. A few months later, she heard through her neighbors in Yonsa what had happened: So Yeon had been arrested, sent back, and sentenced to ten years in a political prison. No one has heard from her since.

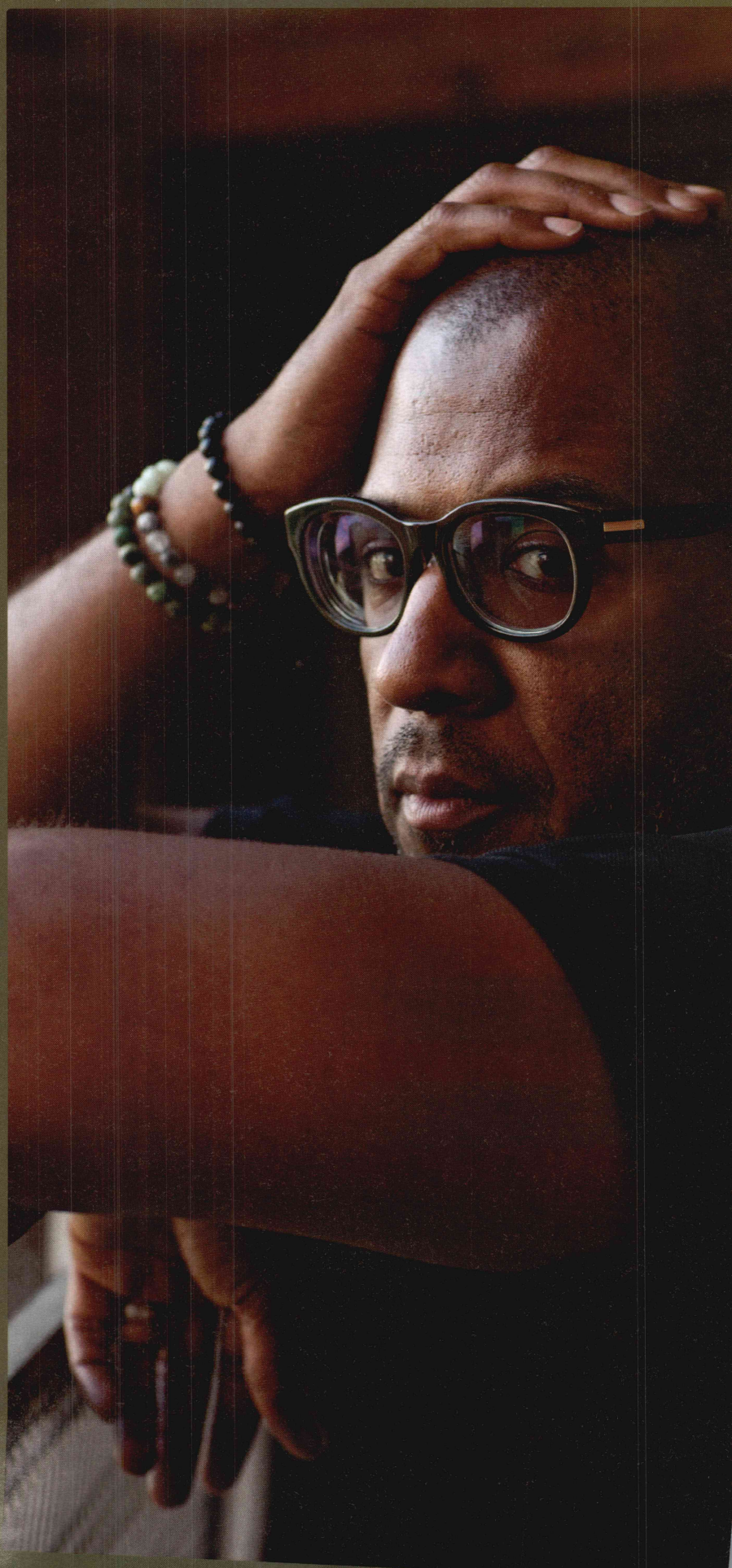
So Won wonders what her sister is like today, if she's even still alive, although she prefers not to think the worst. She'd rather imagine that her sister is largely unchanged, that she would want So Won to take advantage of every second of her freedom. That's what So Won tells herself, at least, when her South Korean life feels so far from what they had imagined.

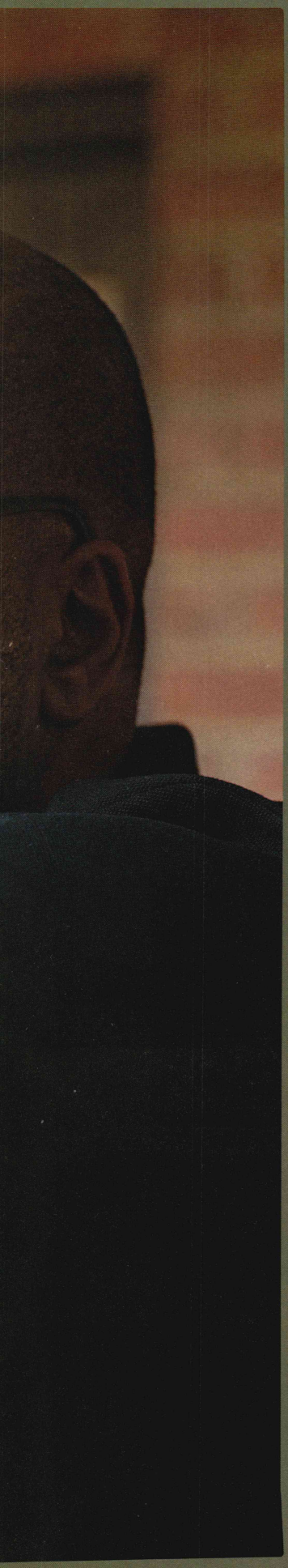
So Won is looking for a job now. She's trying to find something in international relations, which she majored in. She can't be sure, but she swears she noticed the conversation turn cold the moment she disclosed her North Korean background in her last interview. She had photos made up. It's customary in South Korea to send a headshot with every application, no matter the job. It's also common for employers to ask applicants about their height, weight, and plastic-surgery operations. So Won asked the photographer not to Photoshop her face too much, to leave her beauty mark as is. When she got her photos back, the brown speck was gone.

ANN BABE is a South Korean–born and New York–based independent journalist covering the Koreas and gender equality.

HOKYOUNG KIM is an illustrator who was born and raised in Seoul, South Korea, and now lives in Queens, New York.

~~Almost~~





Famous

After two decades spent making movies, including last year's record-breaking *Girls Trip*, Malcolm D. Lee wishes he could stop paying his dues.

By Allison P. Davis

Photographs by Brad Ogbonna

DIRECTOR MALCOLM D. LEE sits second-row center in a darkened editing room at Warner Bros. Sound in midtown Manhattan. He's in cool-dad uniform — straight-leg jeans and a soft-looking gray henley — and tooling around on his MacBook while the final few scenes of *Night School*, the movie he's working on, play in the background. The last 12 minutes or so of the film have to accomplish a lot: a comedic montage, a spotlight moment for last year's breakout star Tiffany Haddish, an emotional resolution, a triumphant speech that segues into a triumphant dance-off. Now it's down to the minutiae

of making it work — sound. If there's a weird breath or a background reaction that's too loud, there goes the carefully considered comedic timing.

Lee turns on a desk lamp, and a soft spotlight shines down on his notepad. He picks up a silver pen, holds it just over the paper, and waits. The tape rolls. We make it through most of the scenes up until a three-second snippet of OutKast's "Hey Ya!" comes in. It came in too loud. We stop. Lee gives firm but friendly directions in a clear and slightly nasal voice. "A music cue steps on Hart's last line," he tells one of the editors. I hadn't even noticed. The tape is rolled back. The tape rolls again. The three-second snip of "Hey Ya!" comes in. We stop. Tape rolled back, tape rolls, "Hey Ya!" again. One more time. Two more times. And one more time, just in case "Hey Ya!" hasn't forever burrowed into the brains of all eight people in the room. Then, the last time, I laugh in a place I hadn't laughed before. He nods and instructs the engineers to go to an earlier scene.

Lee almost didn't take on *Night School*, a Kevin Hart/Tiffany Haddish comedy about a ragtag crew of adults preparing for the GED. It comes out in September, which means a grueling summer of work. Lee was coming down off the success of *Girls Trip*, so when producer and frequent collaborator Will Packer (*Girls Trip, Ride Along, Think Like a Man*) brought him the script, he wanted to say no. "I was tired. The whole year was exhausting. The script was not in great shape. I was like, *I really don't want to work this hard.*" But Lee also saw a strategic move — *Night School* is distributed by Universal Studios, the studio that put out Lee's other movies, including *Girls Trip*. With *Night School* came a first-look deal with the studio, which includes film and TV projects, something he's always wanted to do.

"Universal trusts me now. They value my opinion," Lee explains. "That's meaningful. I've never had a home in TV," he says, pausing. "I've never had a home in movies, to be quite honest."

"How many movies have you made?"

"This is number ten," Lee says.

"Well ... happy anniversary," I offer.

"Thanks," he responds with a dry laugh.

It's wild to think that over the course of a 20-year career, Lee, 48, is just now feeling at home in his industry. He wrote and directed his first major studio film (with Universal) in 1999. *The Best Man* is an ensemble film about upper-class black friends in the days leading up to a wedding. It's long been considered a classic — a standout example of the kind of movie about black people that used to get made all the time. *The Best Man* gave audiences a glimpse of the inner lives and loves of a group of educated, affluent black people and a chance to ogle Taye Diggs's abs.

Since then, Lee's been involved with major studio movies with familiar names, but you probably didn't know who was responsible for them. Ones with all-black casts that used to play regularly on Saturday-afternoon movie marathons on TBS or USA:

"I feel like most of the movies I've made were crowd-pleasing movies. If marketed to the right audience and given the right release date, they would be big hits."



THE BEST MAN, 1999



GIRLS TRIP, 2017



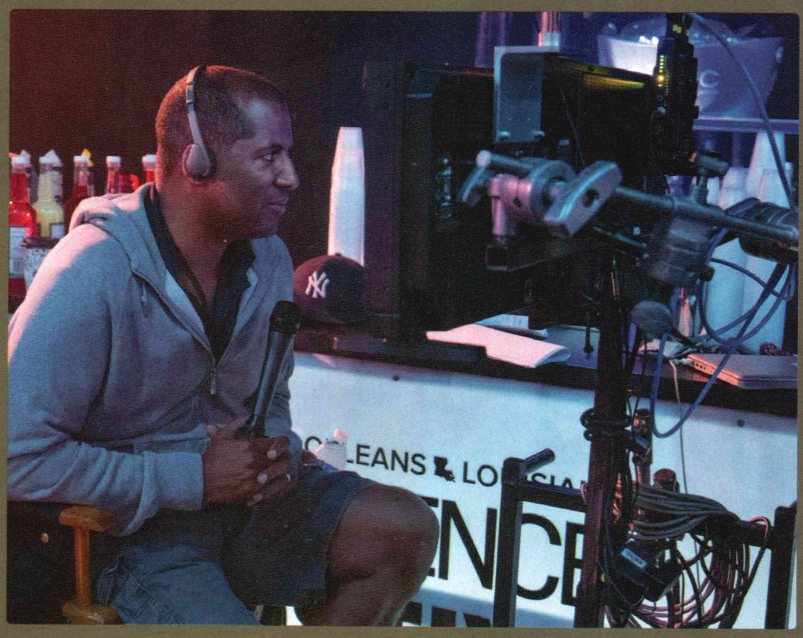
NIGHT SCHOOL, 2018

UNIVERSAL PICTURES













Undercover Brother; *Roll Bounce*; the sequel to his first film, *The Best Man Holiday*; and *Welcome Home, Roscoe Jenkins*. But when Lee looks back at his own career before *Girls Trip*, he doesn't see a string of hits. "Most of my movies, they've been doubles. Singles, OK?" Lee says. "*Girls Trip* was a home run. Maybe even a grand slam."

By every criteria, *Girls Trip* — about four female friends who reunite in New Orleans for Essence Festival — was an undeniable success. Lee directed the script by Kenya Barris and Tracy Oliver. The female-led, raucous (as is the current trend) comedy came out last summer when no other comedies were box-office hits (including the "white" version of *Girls Trip*, *Rough Night*, which made only $8 million on opening night versus *Girls Trip*'s $31.2 million). Some of it was timing — culturally, we needed a big laugh during the summer of 2017. Some of it was the cast of underused actresses: Jada Pinkett Smith, Queen Latifah, Regina Hall. Some of it was Tiffany Haddish. Lee was responsible for her casting, and, as Haddish puts it, he gave her space to play. "Before we started filming, he had a meeting with me," Haddish tells me over the phone. "I was nervous, and he sat me down, and I asked him, 'Why did you hire me?' And he said, 'I watched the tape, and every time you made me laugh. I knew what was coming, and it still made me laugh. I knew that I could work with you.'"

A lot of the movie's success also had to do with a demand for representation from female and African American audiences. It celebrated Black Girl Magic, it celebrated friendship, it celebrated sisterhood at a time when people were sick to death of those things not being celebrated on big screens.

It made oodles of money: It was the first comedy of 2017 to earn more than $100 million and the first movie that was written by, produced by, and starring black people to do so. *Girls Trip* made more money than all 16 of Tyler Perry's feature films combined. "It's kind of always been my intention and goal, since deciding to want to be a filmmaker, to make so-called 'black

movies,' African American movies, mainstream," Lee says, kicking his black Nike-clad heels up onto the desk as the room empties out. It's time for a union-designated lunch break.

Lee puts his hands behind his head and leans back in his chair in the eternal insouciant repose of confident men; except for him, that's not entirely the case. "Am I surprised? I don't know. Somewhat," he says before reiterating, "but it's been my expectation to get there."

SO MANY PARTS of Lee's upbringing will feel familiar to anyone who has watched and loved and related to *The Best Man*. He grew up in brownstone Brooklyn before gentrification battles reached *Portlandia*-sketch levels. His mother was a medical records administrator; his father, a schoolteacher whom Lee describes as a "race man." He wore dashikis and played his son jazz and records of Malcolm X's speeches. "Then he sent me to this lily-white prep school. It was a thing, but I made it through," Lee says. In junior high, he was the only black male in his class of 35 kids; in high school, he was the only one among 55 kids, he recalls. "But I wasn't isolated. I could relate to all kinds of white folks. I had a desire to be liked and a desire to be diplomatic," he says of a childhood where he hung out with jocks and nerds and at people's country homes.

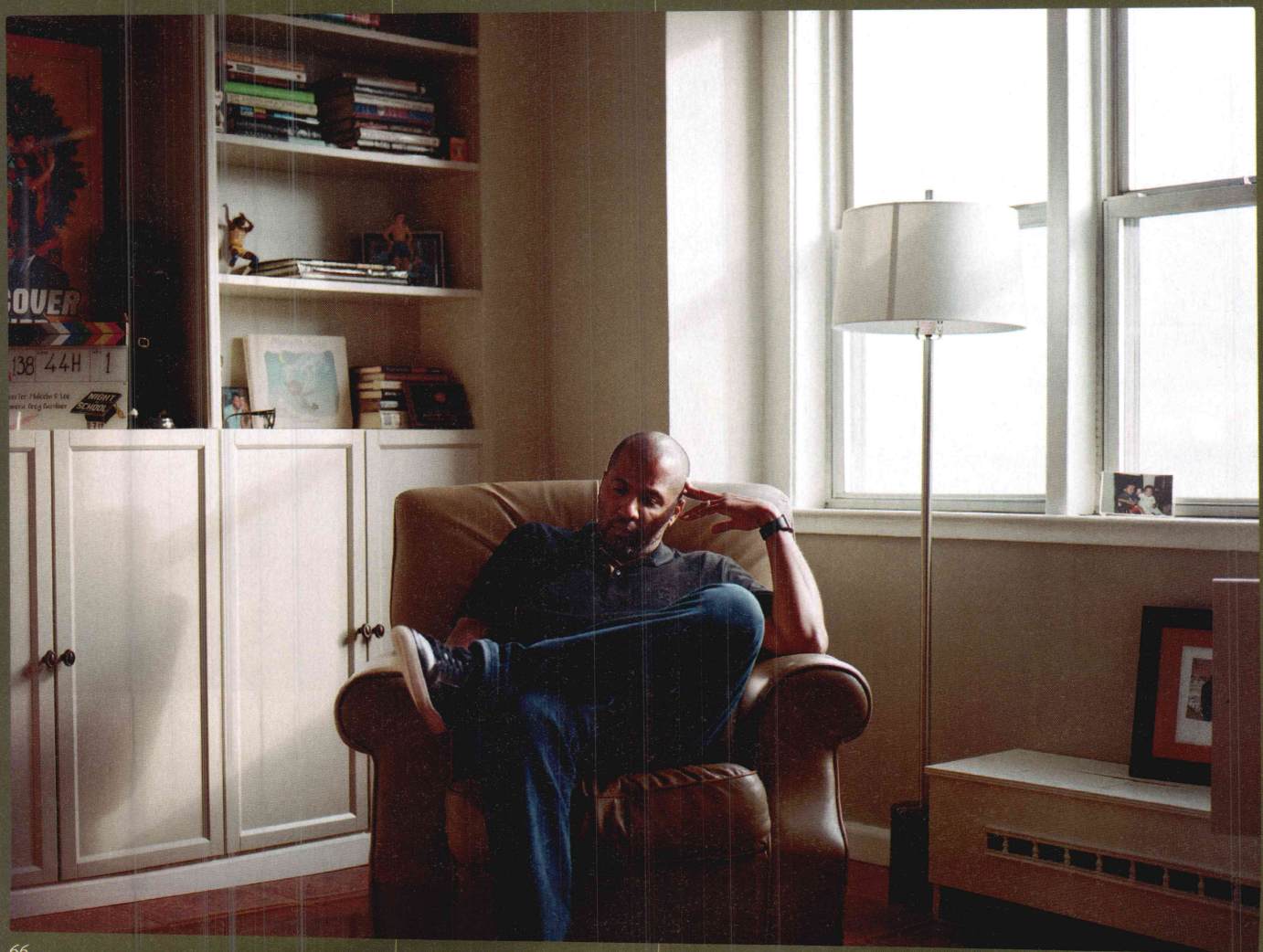
While he was a teen, his cousin Spike — yes, Spike Lee — came to live with his family and attend film school. It was the first time Lee recognized that "somebody black" was going to make movies, and it made Lee want to make movies, too. He started working with Spike whenever he could.

Lee then went to Georgetown, where he found a group of black male friends that he still plays basketball with today. *The Best Man* was born out of those relationships that were so meaningful after being the only black male in his class for eight years. He wrote a screenplay called *Morningside Prep*, loosely based on his own experiences in high school. He got into the Disney Screenwriting Program, then went on to NYU for film school. During all of this, he worked closely with Spike, first as a production assistant on *Malcolm X* while taking a year off from Georgetown, then as an assistant on *Clockers* while in film school, and then as a director trainee on *Girl 6*.

There was a time on the set of *Girl 6* that Lee calls one of his proudest moments. It all had to do with one shot — a mythical shot. "[Spike] was setting up a shot. Theresa Randle and Isaiah Washington

BELOW
Lee in his office

OPPOSITE
The outline for the never-released third installment of the Best Man *franchise*



were kissing, and all these phones were dropping out of the sky. And I said, 'You're going to do a longer lens on that, right?' At first the response was 'Naw,' and then Spike changed his mind. Did the shot. And I thought, *I do have something to contribute.*"

Eventually, Lee felt that there wasn't much more he could contribute to Spike's films and says the feeling was mutual. Spike was gearing up to do *He Got Game*, and Lee asked for a job. "He was like, 'Naw,'" Lee says. "I was hurt. But I understood."

Working with Spike and absorbing the differences between them shaped how Lee perceived his own style. Spike, Lee diagnoses, has never been afraid to say what he thinks and feels. "He wants to call people out, and I'm like, *Maybe let me ingratiate myself first.*" In some ways, at least from my film-going standpoint, the difference between the movies Lee went on to make and the ones his cousin continues to make mirrors what have historically been the two types of accepted "black films" in Hollywood: lower-budget comedies (*Girls Trip* cost only $19 million) and highly sociopolitical race-driven films. Now, with critically and commercially successful movies like *Moonlight*, *Black Panther*, *Get Out*, and Netflix's Strong Black Lead campaign — a push to make and celebrate films by black writers and starring black performers — the categories are expanding.

"I don't focus on race so much, but I've definitely focused on black people," Lee says. "And what makes us unique and what makes us special. And everything that I love about black people and some things that I don't love about black people."

So Lee set out, ready to make movies with his own Malcolm D. Lee signature: "life movies with a lot of laughs and some tears." They also often include a dance sequence, he jokes (*Roll Bounce* has a great one). There was a movie he'd written in film school, *Feast and Famine*, that he describes as a "great New York love story inspired by Rob Reiner, Nora Ephron, and Woody Allen" (he knows it's complicated to like Allen now). Lee wanted to make it as a feature, so he decided to write something commercial to get it sold. He moved into his parents' basement and wrote the screenplay for *The Best Man*. "I was kind of mercenary about how I approached it," he admits. He pulled out everything he learned from his Screenwriter 101 book: three-act structures, set pieces. He made it a wedding movie because they do well in the market, and there hadn't been a black wedding movie at that point. He watched *Diner* and *The Big Chill* as inspiration.

Spike read the script and told him, "This is it." When *The Best Man* was released, he gave Lee a framed poster of the all-black movie *God's Step Children* — a divisive 1938 film about a light-skinned woman who denounces her own race — that now hangs in his office.

"LET ME GIVE YOU the nickel tour," Lee says when I arrive at his Bronx office a few days later. He bought the space after *The Best Man* and refurbished it after *Girls Trip*. Light is streaming in through the big, clean windows, like God's own director of photography. Jazz is playing on a music snob's stereo system.

The two-room space is like a Malcolm D. Lee retrospective. His whole career — past, present, future — hangs on the walls. He shows me his signed posters; a framed *Ebony* article titled, "The Black Pack," featuring the cast of *The Best Man Holiday*; and directors slates from all the films he's worked on. On another wall hang two large whiteboards of upcoming projects, with statuses of each written in neat block script. That first screenplay, *Feast and Famine*, is still on the board, in progress, I notice,

"I don't focus on race so much, but I've definitely focused on black people. And everything that I love about black people and some things that I don't love about black people."



BELOW
Personal memorabilia: a school photo of his son; a photo of Malcolm X, a tribute to the first film he worked on with his cousin, director Spike Lee, in 1991

OPPOSITE
Professional memorabilia: a poster and figurine from the second movie Lee directed, Undercover Brother*; the clapboard and the back of his directors chair from his forthcoming* Night School



with a little note that reads, "Send to Donald Glover."

Lee settles onto a brown leather pouf in the office's sitting area. "You make a movie like *The Best Man*," he says, picking up the conversation from where we left off in the studio, "and … everybody wants to talk to you." But Lee wasn't quite sure what he wanted to do next. "I wanted to write my own stuff and be a writer-director, be an auteur," he says.

He took *Undercover Brother*.

"They always say, 'One for me, one for you,'" he shrugs. It was a spoof of blaxploitation films of the 1970s, starring Eddie Griffin and Chris Kattan, long on slapsticky humor and broad characters. I remember seeing it as a teen and laughing hysterically at a joke about white people and mayonnaise. When Lee made it, he was told he was making a movie for 13-year-olds. "It could have been a minstrel show in the wrong person's hands. But I tried to make it feel grounded."

For his next project, Lee turned down *Hitch* because it would have "broken me," he says. "There were huge studio expectations. There was a lot of pressure that I didn't want to deal with at the time." Instead, he decided to direct the Bow Wow comedy *Roll Bounce* in 2004. It was supposed to be a $100 million movie for Fox Searchlight, Lee explains. But the studio pushed it to a September release date when all the kids were in school. There was no marketing budget. It made only around $17 million at the box office and received lukewarm reviews.

"I feel like most of the movies I've made — *Undercover Brother*, *Best Man*, *Roscoe*, *Best Man Holiday*, *Barbershop* — they all were movies that I would say were crowd-pleasing movies," he says. "If marketed correctly, or marketed to the right audience and given the right release date, they would be big hits. The people that were with me were saying that as well."

As he runs through his filmography like an IRL IMDB page, Lee has reasons for why each one didn't reach commercial success. He talks rapidly, pointing at the corresponding movie poster as he goes. *Roll Bounce*, the September release. Next was *Welcome Home, Roscoe Jenkins* starring Martin Lawrence that was stymied by a "terrible title." *Soul Men*: Samuel L. Jackson was difficult to work with — "he's harder on black directors" — and "nobody gave a s--- about two old R&B singers."

Scary Movie 5? "It was just a bad movie. Believe me. Don't bother going to see that movie. Or renting it, or anything. It's not worth your time," he groans. "I needed work!"

He hadn't made a movie in the three years after *Soul Men*, so when Bob Weinstein called him up about *Scary Movie 5* and said, "You know black. And there's a number of things in the movie that will require that," Lee said OK. On set, it turned out he was really just a backseat director. The producer, he says, interfered constantly. Lee didn't even finish editing the film. Now the *Scary Movie* poster hangs on his wall of shame, across from the bathroom, next to a poster of Bill Cosby.

FOR YEARS THERE was a belief in Hollywood that movies led by all-black casts didn't sell overseas. "Harvey Weinstein, in all his wisdom, said,

'These movies are a bad model. They can't make money.' And the studio's thing was, *We can get Morris Chestnut to be in* Fast and Furious *and we can get Terrence Howard to do such and such, and we'll still get a black audience*," Lee says, explaining the three-year dry spell leading up to *Scary Movie 5*. It was only six years ago that Tyler Perry wrote a letter on his website begging Hollywood executives to make more films with all-black casts to save these types of movies from going extinct. Because they sort of had. Gone were movies like *Soul Food* and *Two Can Play That Game* and *Friday*. The kinds of projects Lee hung his hat on — funny and thoroughly black. Instead, black actors like Chestnut and Howard, people Lee had worked with, were cast in "white" movies in order to attract a black audience, he says.

Lee took what he could get, but even he had limits. He was offered a *Heaven Can Wait* remake, "where a black guy dies and is sent back to earth to teach an all-white town how to sing gospel," he says with an eye-roll. "It was frustrating because everyone was always talking about brands. So I was thinking, *Well, what's my brand?* My brand is *The Best Man*." He needed to get back to that.

While still working on *Scary Movie 5* in 2011, he became determined to make a sequel to *The Best Man* to recapture the magic of that first movie but also to create something that was "a little more challenging. Something that's gonna deal with a little more deeper life stuff," he says. "To let people know that I wasn't just a one-trick pony."

So he planned a dinner with the whole cast: Chestnut, Diggs, Howard, Sanaa Lathan, Nia Long, Harold Perrineau, Regina Hall. Lee booked a table for ten at Boa, a steak restaurant he didn't realize was right below the Soho House (a tale of two Hollywoods), and hired a photographer to come take pictures and then leak them. He needed buzz.

Everyone was on board — none of the actors had steady work, either. But Lee read the market and said they had to wait till *Jumping the Broom* came out, another comedy with an all-black cast (Paula Patton and Angela Bassett) and a wedding plot. The movie made only $37.7 million, but it was enough for Universal to have some confidence in the profitability of *The Best Man Holiday*. "I told [the cast], 'If we do this, nobody's getting paid what they're worth. You got to think about this as an indie movie with studio financing.'" They all agreed.

The movie reunited the original cast 15 years after when the first movie left off. They get back together over the holidays, and though they've drifted apart, all the old romances and rivalries remain. The movie was a modest success ($72.8 million), which Lee attributes to the fact that it premiered on the weekend before *Thor* opened. But even if the numbers weren't there, Lee feels the movie righted the industry. "People realized, *OK, these movies do make money.*"

At first it seemed the studio wanted to make a third — Lee thinks it will be the best one, "the Malcolm Lee movie we'd expect." But they won't pay. It's been delayed indefinitely. "I don't feel at this point that I should have to struggle. I kind of paid my dues." →

For years there was a belief in Hollywood that movies led by all-black casts didn't sell overseas. "Harvey Weinstein, in all his wisdom, said, 'These movies are a bad model. They can't make money.'"



WHEN *THE BEST MAN HOLIDAY* came out, Lee remembers one review from *USA Today*. "They called it a 'race-themed movie,' he says in frustration. He hates that term. Race isn't a theme or a genre. "There was nothing race-themed about this movie at all! I'm doing movies about people. About relationships. Do they happen to have black skin? Yeah. It's a misnomer."

Lee's attempt to distance himself from a made-up genre is a little complicated but understandable. Because black comedies are often made on smaller budgets, in shorter time, they are perceived as lower quality — they are dismissed. As Will Packer, producer of *Girls Trip* and *Night School*, explains, "You don't have the mainstream marketing push often or the mainstream resources, because Hollywood tends to relegate those types of movies to the niche. I truly believe that it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy."

With *Girls Trip*, there are new questions, new worries: Why didn't Tiffany Haddish get the same nominations as Melissa McCarthy for *Bridesmaids*? Why isn't Lee on the same list of prominent comedic writers and directors like Judd Apatow? "Part of it is that you're talking about guys that have done bigger box office globally, and so they should be lauded and acclaimed for that," says Packer. "But given the budgets that Malcolm Lee has been working with, given the profit margins of his films, I think he should be talked about in a similar breath."

It's something that Lee has felt himself. "I don't think I get put in that same category as other comedy filmmakers," he says. "I got great reviews on *Best Man Holiday*, great on *Barbershop*, great on *Girls Trip*, so I can't really complain. But there's a little bit of a disconnect that I feel like, *Put me in that category, too*," he says, patting his chest. "Because I'm getting laughs."

Lee sighs, resigned. "But you just don't ever… you just don't ever know. So again, you do *Night School*, because, hey, you never know what this movie's going to do. You have to get your next job. Have to store your acorns."

Tracy Oliver, who co-wrote *Girls Trip* and is the showrunner of the TV adaptation of *The First Wives Club*, recognizes the pattern, she tells me via email: "Unfortunately, there's still a lot of uphill battles that creators of color face. Every success, like *Girls Trip*, is still considered the exception to the rule, so you're constantly having to prove yourself to mostly white male executives that just don't get it."

For now, Lee has work — lots of it. He has *Night School*. He has TV to work on. There's another big project he can't talk about. He wants to try something other than comedy, eventually, like political or adventure movies, or period pieces, or a stunt-driven movie, or a comic book movie, or an intimate drama, or a character study. But whatever he does, he wants to feel like he's broken through.

"I've had a string of number twos. I've been killing it on number two. *Best Man Holiday*, *Barbershop* — all number two. But people are paying attention. Let's see what happens with this," he gestures to the screen.

"I've had a string of number twos. I've been killing it on number two. But people are paying attention."

Back in the studio, everyone comes streaming in after the lunch hour. Lee takes his feet off the table and spins his chair toward the screen. He drains his water bottle, then shoots it into a garbage can a good 10 feet away. He misses. Someone scoops it up, hands it back to him, and he shoots again.



ALLISON P. DAVIS is a Brooklyn-based staff writer for *The Cut* and *New York* magazine.

BRAD OGBONNA was born in Minnesota and currently lives in New York. He was named one of PDN's 30 New and Emerging Photographers to Watch in 2018.



MEANWHILE

Lucille & CEE CEE



CEE CEE: WE'VE KNOWN EACH OTHER SEVEN YEARS. Lucille: NAH, FOREVER! Lucille WAS MY SENIOR COMPANION. I HELPED HER OUT. WE WENT SHOPPING. WE GOT OUR TOES DONE. TOLD EACH OTHER THINGS. WE JUST LOVE EACH OTHER. I TELL HER SHE'S NOT MY SENIOR COMPANION. SHE'S MY FRIEND. THANK you, Lucille.

CEE CEE IS ALWAYS THERE to HELP ME. ONE TIME I WAS KIND of BROKE and CEECEE WENT OUT and GAVE ME TWENTY DOLLARS. TWENTY DOLLARS! YEAH, SWEETIE. IF CEE CEE CAN HELP you, SHE WILL.

SOMETIMES WE DISAGREE, BUT WE SAY IT and THEN IT'S OVER. IF you FEEL LIKE you GOTTA SAY SOMETHING, SAY IT. HAVE IT OUT. you HAVE to BE TRUTHFUL to EACH OTHER. LIKE WHEN THE DOCTOR TELLS you THE HARD STUFF. you GOTTA TELL THE TRUTH. WE TALK ABOUT EVERYTHING.

WE'LL BE BEST FRIENDS TILL ONE of US GOES. I DON'T WANT to TALK ABOUT THAT. I CAN'T THINK of ANYTHING BUT RESPECT for HER. THANK you, CEE CEE, I LOVE YA. THANK you, Lucille.

I met Lucille and Cee Cee at the Senior Center annex in Truth or Consequences, New Mexico, where they eat lunch together every weekday. Lucille is 96 and speaks loudly with a thick Long Island accent. She's hard of hearing but doesn't miss a beat. Cee Cee is 91 and originally from Applegate, California. She lost two daughters in as many years. I asked them about friendship later in life.

By WENDY MacNAUGHTON

YBCA

BAY AREA NOW







ART IN THE MAKING
SEP 07, 2018— MAR 24, 2019

YBCA's signature exhibition returns, showcasing the work of leading Bay Area artists in a broad range of creative practices, including painting, photography, ceramics, textiles, video installation, and digital media. Learn more at YBCA.org

RULES OF MODERN INVESTING™

#13 **EXPECT LOW COSTS.**

#14 **EXPECT FULL SERVICE.**

#15 **EXPECT SATISFACTION AND A SATISFACTION GUARANTEE.**

Our commitment to satisfaction is backed by a guarantee. If you're not completely satisfied, we'll refund your fee or commission and work with you to make things right. Ask your broker if they follow these rules. If you don't like their answer, ask again at Schwab.

Are you getting low costs, full service, and a Satisfaction Guarantee?

	Schwab	E*TRADE	Fidelity	TD AMERITRADE	Vanguard
Standard Online Equity Trades	$4.95	$6.95	$4.95	$6.95	$7–$20 depending on number of trades
Satisfaction Guarantee	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO

Competitor firm information is standard pricing obtained from their respective websites as of 4/11/18.
Competitor pricing and offers subject to change without notice.

Visit **Schwab.com/CompareUs** to learn more

Wealth Management at Charles Schwab
PLANNING | PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT | INCOME STRATEGIES | BANKING

charles SCHWAB



Own your tomorrow.

"Highest in Investor Satisfaction with Full Service Brokerage Firms, Three Years In a Row."

Brokerage Products: Not FDIC Insured · No Bank Guarantee · May Lose Value

Charles Schwab received the highest numerical score in the J.D. Power 2016-2018 Full Service Investor Satisfaction Study. 2018 study based on 4,419 total responses from 18 firms measuring opinions of investors who used full-service investment institutions, surveyed November-December 2017. Your experiences may vary. Visit jdpower.com

The $4.95 standard online equity commission does not apply to certain transactions. See Schwab.com/pricing for details. For the Satisfaction Guarantee, go to Schwab.com/satisfaction to learn what's included and how it works.

Wealth Management refers to a number of different products and services offered through various subsidiaries of The Charles Schwab Corporation. See Schwab.com/wealth.

The Charles Schwab Corporation provides a full range of brokerage, banking and financial advisory services through its operating subsidiaries. Its broker-dealer subsidiary, Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. (Schwab), Member SIPC, offers investment services and products, including Schwab brokerage accounts. Its banking subsidiary, Charles Schwab Bank (member FDIC and an Equal Housing Lender), provides deposit and lending services and products.

©2018 Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. All rights reserved. Member SIPC. (0518-8HD1) ADP99000-00